

ST. LEON:  
A  
TALE  
OF THE  
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

*Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee,  
thou liar of the first magnitude.*

CONGREVE.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR G. C. AND J. ROBINSON,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1799.

R. NOBLE, Printer, Great Shire-Lane.

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# TRAVELS

OF

ST. LEON.

## CHAP. I.

**I**T was in the evening of a summer's day in the latter end of the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, that a stranger arrived at my habitation. He was feeble, emaciated and pale, his forehead full of wrinkles, and his hair and beard as white as snow. Care was written in his face ; it was easy to perceive that he had suffered much from distress of mind ; yet his eye was still quick and lively, with a strong ex-

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pression

pression of suspiciousness and anxiety. His garb, which externally consisted of nothing more than a robe of russet brown, with a girdle of the same, was coarse, threadbare and ragged. He supported his tottering steps with a staff; and, having lost his foreteeth, his speech was indistinct and difficult to be comprehended. His wretched appearance excited my compassion, at the same time that I could easily discern, beneath all its disadvantages, that he was no common beggar or rustic. Ruined and squalid as he appeared, I thought I could perceive traces in his countenance of what had formerly been both daring enterprise, profound meditation and generous humanity.

I saw that he was much fatigued, and I invited him to rest himself upon the bench before the door. I set before him bread and wine, and he par-

took of both. I asked him his name and his country. He told me that he was a Venetian, and that his name, as nearly as I could collect, was signor Francesco Zampieri. He seemed however averse to speaking, and he requested me to suffer him to pass the night in my habitation. There was nothing singular in the request, a hospitality of this sort being the practice of the neighbourhood; and humanity would have prompted my compliance, if I had not been still more strongly urged by an undefinable curiosity, that began to spring up in my bosom. I prepared for him a camp-bed in a summer-house at the end of my garden. As soon as it was ready, he desired to be left alone, that he might seek in rest some relief from the fatigue he had undergone.

He retired early; and therefore, soon after day-break the next morning, I

waited on him to enquire how he had rested. He led me out into the fields ; the morning was genial and exhilarating. We proceeded, till we came to a retired spot, which had frequently been the scene of my solitary meditations, and there seated ourselves upon a bank. We had been mutually silent during the walk. As soon as we were seated, the stranger began : You are, I understand, a Frenchman, and your name the count de St. Leon ? I bowed assent.

St. Leon, said he, there is something in your countenance and manner that prepossesses me in your favour. The only thing I have left to do in the world, is to die ; and what I seek at present, is a friend who will take care that I shall be suffered to die in peace. Shall I trust you ? Will you be that friend to me ?

I was



I was astonished at this way of commencing his confidence in me; but I did not hesitate to promise that he should not find me deficient in any thing that became a man of humanity and honour.

You do not, I think, live alone? You have a wife and children?

I have.

Yet none of them were at home when I arrived last night. You brought yourself to the summer-house every thing that was necessary for my accommodation.

I did so. But I have a wife to whom I have been married seventeen years, and from whom I have no reserves. I told her of your arrival; I spoke of your appearance; I mentioned your name.

It is no matter. She has not seen me. My name is not Zampieri; I am no Venetian.



Who are you then?

That you shall never know. It makes no part of the confidence I design to repose in you. My name shall be buried with me in the grave; nor shall any one who has hitherto known me, know how, at what time, or on what spot of earth I shall terminate my existence. The cloud of oblivion shall shelter me from all human curiosity. What I require of you is that you pledge your honour and the faith of a man, that you will never reveal to your wife, your children, or any human being, what you may hereafter know of me, and that no particular that relates to my history shall be disclosed, till at least one hundred years after my decease.

Upon these conditions I am sorry that I must decline your confidence. My wife is a part of myself; for the last six years at least I have had no thought

thought in which she has not participated; and these have been the most tranquil and happy years of my life. My heart was formed by nature for social ties; habit has confirmed the propensity; and I will not now consent to any thing that shall infringe on the happiness of my soul.

While I spoke, I could perceive that my companion grew disturbed and angry. At length, turning towards me a look of ineffable contempt, he replied:

Feeble and effeminate mortal! You are neither a knight nor a Frenchman! Or rather, having been both, you have forgotten in inglorious obscurity every thing worthy of either! Was ever gallant action atchieved, by him who was incapable of separating himself from a woman? Was ever a great discovery prosecuted, or an important benefit conferred upon the human race,

by him who was incapable of standing, and thinking, and feeling, alone? Under the usurping and dishonoured name of virtue, you have sunk into a slavery baser than that of the enchantress Alcina. In vain might honour, worth and immortal renown proffer their favours to him who has made himself the basest of all sublunary things, the puppet of a woman, the plaything of her pleasure, wasting an inglorious life in the gratification of her wishes and the performance of her commands!

I felt that I was not wholly unmoved at this expostulation. The stranger touched upon the first and foremost passions of my soul, passions the operation of which had long been suspended, but which were by no means extinguished in my bosom. He proceeded:

But

But it is well! Years have passed over my head in vain, and I have not learned to distinguish a man of honour from a slave. This is only one additional sorrow to those in which my life has been spent. I have wandered through every region of the earth, and have found only disappointment. I have entered the courts of princes; I have accompanied the march of armies; I have pined in the putridity of dungeons. I have tasted every vicissitude of splendour and meanness; five times have I been led to the scaffold, and with difficulty escaped a public execution. Hated by mankind, hunted from the face of the earth, pursued by every atrocious calumny, without a country, without a roof, without a friend; the addition that can be made to such misfortunes scarcely deserves a thought.

While he spoke, curiosity, resistless curiosity, presented itself as a new motive,



tive, in aid of the sense of shame which the stranger had just before kindled in my bosom. His manner was inconceivably impressive; his voice, though inarticulate from age, had an irresistible melody and volume of sound, which awed, while it won, the heart. His front appeared open, large, and commanding; and, though he complained, his complaints seemed to be those of conscious dignity and innocence. He went on:

Farewel, St. Leon! I go, and you shall see me, and hear of me no more. You will repent, when it is too late, the folly of this day's determination. I appear mean and insignificant in your eyes. You think my secrets not worth your curiosity, and my benefits not worth your acceptance. Know that my benefits are such as kings would barter their thrones to purchase, and that my wealth exceeds the wealth of empires. You are degraded from the  
rank

rank you once held among mankind ;  
your children are destined to live in  
the inglorious condition of peasants:  
This day you might have redeemed all  
your misfortunes, and raised yourself  
to a station more illustrious than that  
to which you were born. Farewel !  
Destiny has marked out you and yours  
for obscurity and oblivion, and you  
do well to reject magnificence and  
distinction when they proffer them-  
selves for your acceptance.

Stop, cried I, mysterious stranger !  
Grant me a moment's leisure to reflect  
and determine !

He had risen to depart, with a ges-  
ture of resolution and contempt. At  
my exclamation he paused, and again  
turned himself towards me. My soul  
was in tumults.

Answer me, most ambiguous and  
impenetrable of mortals ! what is thy  
story ? and what the secrets, the dis-

closure of which is pregnant with consequences so extraordinary?

Do you recollect the conditions upon which only the disclosure can be made?

What can I say? Shall I determine to part with that which for years has constituted the only consolation of my life? Shall I suppress the curiosity which now torments me, and reject the boon you pretend to have the power to confer?

I grant you the interval for reflection you demand. I refuse to place further confidence in you, till you have maturely examined yourself, and roused all the energies of your spirit to encounter the task you undertake.

One word more. You know not, indeed you know not, what a woman you exclude from your confidence. She is more worthy of it than I am. Referring to my own experience and knowledge

knowledge of the world, I can safely pronounce her the first of her sex, perhaps the first of human beings. Indulge me in this ; include her in your confidence ; and I am content.

Be silent ! I have made my determination ; do you make yours ! Know, I would not, if I could, and cannot, if I would, repose the secrets that press upon me in more than a single bosom. It was upon this condition I received the communication ; upon this condition only can I impart it. I am resolved ; to die is the election of my soul, a consummation for which I impatiently wait. Having determined therefore to withdraw myself from the powers committed to me, I am at liberty to impart them ; upon the same condition, and no other, you may one day, if you desire it, seek the relief of confidence.

Having



Having thus spoken, the stranger rose from his seat. It was yet early morning, nor was it likely we should meet any one in our walk. He however employed the precaution of causing me to explore the path, and to see that we should return uninterrupted. We returned to the summer-house. The window-shutters were still closed; the stranger determined they should remain so. When I had come to him as soon as I rose, I had found the door secured, nor had he admitted me, till he recognised my voice, and had ascertained that I was alone. These precautions scarcely excited my attention at the time; but, after the conversation that had just passed, they returned distinctly to my memory.

The remainder of the day which had been opened by this extraordinary scene, was passed by me in great anxiety. I ruminated with unceasing wonder

der and perturbation upon the words of the stranger. Shall I shut upon myself the gate of knowledge and information? Is it not the part of a feeble and effeminate mind to refuse instruction, because he is not at liberty to communicate that instruction to another, to a wife? The stranger professes to be able to raise me to the utmost height of wealth and distinction. Shall I refuse the gift, which in a former instance I forfeited, but for which, though contemplated as at an impracticable distance, my whole soul longs? If there is any thing dishonourable connected with the participation of this wealth, I shall still be at liberty to refuse it. There can be no crime in hearing what this man has to communicate. I shall still, and always, be master of myself; nor can I have any thing personally to fear from a man so feeble, so decrepid, so emaciated,

Yet

Yet what can be the gifts worthy of acceptance, of a man who, while he possesses them, is tired of life, and desires to die; or what the wealth of him who bears about him every external symptom of poverty and desolation?

The conversation I had just held, revived in my mind the true feeling of my present situation. The wounds of my soul had been lulled into temporary insensibility; but they were in a state, in which the slightest accident was capable of making them bleed afresh and with all their former violence. I had rather steeled my mind to endure what seemed unavoidable, than reconciled myself to my fate. The youthful passions of my soul, which my early years had written there in characters so deep, were by no means effaced. I could not contemplate the splendour of rank with an impartial

impartial eye. I could not think of the alternative of distinction or obscurity for my children with indifference. But, most of all, the moment I had experienced for them of hunger and impending destruction by famine, had produced an indelible impression. It had destroyed all romance, I had almost said all dignity, in my mind for ever. It had snapped, as by the touch of a red-hot iron, all the finer and more etherialised nerves of my frame. It had planted the sordid love of gold in my heart, there, by its baneful vegetation, to poison its nobler and more salubrious feelings.

When I returned to the house, Marguerite enquired of me respecting the stranger, but my answers were short and embarrassed. She seemed to wonder that he did not come into the house, and partake of some refreshment in the midst of my family. She asked,



asked, whether he were indisposed, and whether he did not stand in need of some assistance that she might afford him? Perceiving however that I was desirous of saying as little as possible respecting him, she presently became silent. I could see that she was hurt at my incommunicativeness, yet I could not prevail upon myself to enter into an explanation of the causes of my taciturnity. Ours was a family of love, and I could observe that the children sympathised with their mother, and secretly were surpris'd at and lamented my reserve. There would have been little in this, in perhaps any other family but ours. But the last six years had been spent by us in such primeval simplicity, that scarcely one of us had a thought but what was known to the rest. Marguerite cherished my frankness and unreserve with peculiar zeal; she remembered with bitterness of soul the

the periods in which I fostered conceptions only proper to myself, periods of dreadful calamity, or of rooted melancholy and sadness. She could not help regarding the silence into which for the present occasion I relapsed, as a portent of evil augury. Charles, who was now sixteen years of age, recollected the period of our ruined fortunes, when he had been alone with me at Paris, and partook of his mother's feelings.

A trifling circumstance, at this time occasioned by the little Marguerite, now eight years of age, rendered the restraint under which I laboured more memorable and striking. She had left a little book of fairy tales, in which she had been reading the day before, in the summer-house. At first she did not recollect what was become of it, and employed herself in searching for it with great assiduity. Of a sudden however

however she remembered where she had read in it last; and, exclaiming with exultation, It is in the summer-house! sprang forward to fetch it. I detained her, and told her there was a sick gentleman there that she would disturb. Then, dear Julia! rejoined she, be so good as to get it for me; you are so quiet and so careful, you never disturb any body.

My love, answered I, nobody must get it for you. The gentleman chuses to be alone, and will not let any body come to him. You shall have it after dinner.

Ah, but, papa, I want it now. I put it away, just where the naughty giant had shut up the gentleman in the dungeon, who came to take away the lady. I was obliged to put it away then, because mamma called me to go to bed; but I want so to know what will become of them, you cannot think.

Well,

Well, dear Marguerite, I am sorry you must wait ; but you must learn to have patience.

Do you know, papa, I walked in the garden before breakfast. And so, not thinking of any thing, I came to the summer-house ; and I tried to open the door, but I could not. I found it was locked. So I thought Julia was there, and I knocked, and called Julia, but nobody answered. So then I knew Julia was not there, for I was sure she would have opened the door. So I climbed upon the stump of the pear-tree, and tried to look in at the window ; but the shutters were shut, and I could not get to see over the top of them. And I walked all round the summer-house, and all the shutters were shut. Papa, I wish you would not let a man get into the summer-house, who shuts all the shutters, and locks the door. You always used to  
let



let me go into every room I liked ; and, do you know, I think none but bad people lock and bolt themselves up so. It puts me in mind of the giants with their draw-bridges and their pit-falls ; I shall be quite afraid of this frightful old man.

This prattle of the child was nothing ; yet it increased the embarrassment of my situation, and made the peculiarity of the case more conspicuous. Finding her pertinacious in insisting upon a topic that was disagreeable to me, her mother called her from me, and put her upon some occupation that served to divert her attention. I felt like a person that was guilty of some crime ; and this consideration and kindness of my wife, when I seemed to myself to deserve her reproach, had not the power to calm my uneasiness.

These

These little occurrences appeared like the beginning of a separation of interests, and estrangement of hearts, I tasked myself severely. I summoned the whole force of my mind, that I might strictly consider what it was in which I was about to engage. If this slight and casual hint of a secret is felt both by Marguerite and myself with so much uneasiness and embarrassment, what will be our situation, if I go on to accept the stranger's confidence, and become the depository of an arcanum so important as he represents his to be? He declares himself able to bestow upon me the highest opulence; what will be the feelings of my wife and children, when they see my condition suddenly changed from its present humble appearance to splendour and wealth, without being able to assign the source of this extraordinary accession?

It

It is difficult to conceive a family-picture more enviable, than that to which I was now continually present, and of which I formed a part. We had been happy on the banks of the Garonne, and we had pictured to ourselves a plan of happiness immediately on our arrival in the city of Constance. But these were little and imperfect, compared with what I now enjoyed. In the first situation my children were infants, and in the second the eldest was but ten years of age. The mother was now thirty-five ; and she had lost, in my eyes at least, none of her personal attractions. Her intellectual accomplishments were much greater than ever. Her understanding was matured, her judgment decided, her experience more comprehensive. As she had a greater compass of materials to work upon, her fancy was more playful, her conversation richer, and her

her reflections more amusing and profound. The matronal character she had acquired, had had no other effect on her feelings, than to render them more deep, more true and magnetical. Her disposition was more entirely affectionate, than it had been, even in the first year of our cohabitation. Her attachment to her children was exemplary, and her vigilance uninterrupted; and, for myself, she was accustomed, in all that related to our mutual love, to enter into my sentiments and inclinations with so just a tone of equality and kindness, that we seemed to be two bodies animated by a single soul. If the mother were improved, the children were still more improved. In their early years we are attached to our offspring, merely because it is ours, and in a way that has led superficial speculators to consider the attachment, less as the necessary operation of a sen-



sible and conscious mind, than as a wise provision of nature for the perpetuation of the species. But, as they grow up, the case is different. Our partiality is then confirmed or diminished, by qualities visible to an impartial bystander as really as to ourselves. They then cease to be merely the objects of our solicitude, and become our companions, the partners of our sentiments, and the counsellors of our undertakings. Such at least was my case at the present period. Charles, who was now sixteen, was manly beyond his years, while the native fire of his disposition was tempered by adversity, by an humble situation, and by the ardour of filial and fraternal affection. Julia, who was two years younger, became daily more interesting by the mildness of her disposition and the tenderness of her sensibility. Louisa was only twelve; but, as she was extremely

tremely notable, and had an uncommonly quick and accurate spirit of imitation, she rendered herself exceedingly useful to her mother. Marguerite, the plaything and amusement of the family, had, as I have said, just completed the eighth year of her age.

One exquisite source of gratification, when it is not a source of uneasiness, to speak from my own experience, which a parent finds in the society of his children, is their individuality. They are not puppets, moved with wires, and to be played on at will. Almost from the hour of their birth, they have a will of their own, to be consulted and negociated with. We may say to them, as Adam to the general mother of mankind, But now, thou wert flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone ; and, even now, thou standest before me, vested in the prerogatives of sentiment and reason ; a living

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living being, to be regarded with attention and deference, to be courted, not compelled, susceptible of the various catalogue of human passions, capable of resentment and gratitude, of indignation and love, of perverseness and submission. It is because thou art thus formed that I love thee. I cannot be interested about objects inanimate or brute. I require a somewhat that shall exercise my judgment, and awaken my moral feelings. It is necessary to me to approve myself, and be approved by another. I rejoice to stand before you, at once the defendant and the judge. I rejoice in the restraint to which your independent character subjects me, and it will be my pride to cultivate that independence in your mind. I would negotiate for your affections and confidence, and not be loved by you, but in proportion as I shall have done something to

to deserve it. I could not congratulate myself upon your correspondence to my wishes, if it had not been in your power to withhold it.

While I indulge myself in this vein of reflection, I seem again to see my family, as they surrounded me in the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, Marguerite the partner of my life, Charles the brother of my cares, the blooming Julia, the sage Louisa, and the playful cadette of the family. How richly furnished, how chearful, how heart-reviving appeared to me the apartment in which they were assembled ! I dwell upon the image with fond affection and lingering delight. Where are they now ? How has all this happiness been maliciously undermined, and irrevocably destroyed ! To look back on it, it seems like the idle fabric of a dream. I awake, and find myself alone ! Were there really



such persons? Where are they dispersed? Whither are they gone? Oh, miserable solitude and desertion, to which I have so long been condemned! I see nothing around me, but speechless walls, or human faces that say as little to my heart as the walls themselves! How palsied is my soul! How withered my affections!——But I will not anticipate.

## CHAP. II.

I Carried food to the stranger as occasion required in the course of the day. He seemed indisposed to speak, and we exchanged scarcely more than two or three words. The next morning was the implied time to which the question of his confidence was deferred, and I went to him with the full resolution of refusing it. Whether it were that he discerned this resolution in my countenance, or that, in the interval that elapsed, he had formed a meaner opinion of my character, and thought me unfit for the purposes he intended I should answer, certain it is that he anticipated me. At the same time he magnified the importance of the gifts

he had to communicate. He expressed himself astonished at the precipitateness of his yesterday's conduct. It was not till after much trial and long probation that he could choose himself a confident. I was not at present fit for the character, nor perhaps ever should be. The talent he possessed, was one upon which the fate of nations and of the human species might be made to depend. God had given it for the best and highest purposes; and the vessel in which it was deposited, must be purified from the alloy of human frailty. It might be abused, and applied to the most atrocious designs. It might blind the understanding of the wisest, and corrupt the integrity of the noblest. It might overturn kingdoms, and change the whole order of human society into anarchy and barbarism. It might render its possessor the

the universal plague or the universal tyrant of mankind.

Go, St. Leon! added the stranger, you are not qualified for so important a trust. You are not yet purged of imbecility and weakness. Though you have passed through much, and had considerable experience, you are yet a child. I had heard your history, and expected to find you a different man. Go, and learn to know yourself for what you are, frivolous and insignificant, worthy to have been born a peasant, and not fitted to adorn the rolls of chivalry or the rank to which you were destined!

There was something so impressive in the rebuke and contempt of this venerable sage, that made it impossible to contend with them. Never was there a man more singular, and in whom were united greater apparent contradictions. Observe him in a quiet



and unanimated moment, you might almost take him for a common beggar, a poor, miserable wretch, in whom life lingered, and insensate stupidity reigned. But, when his soul was touched in any of those points in which it was most alive, he rose at once, and appeared a giant. His voice was the voice of thunder ; and rolling in a rich and sublime swell, it arrested and stilled, while it withered all the nerves, of the soul. His eye-beam sat upon your countenance, and seemed to look through you. You wished to escape from its penetrating power, but you had not the strength to move. I began in a manner to feel as if it were some mysterious and superior being in human form, and not a mortal, with whom I was concerned.

What a strange and contradictory being is man ! I had gone to the summer-house this morning, with a firm resolution

resolution to refuse the gifts and the communication of the stranger. I felt lightened as it were from a burthen, which the whole preceding day had oppressed me, while I formed this resolution. I was chearful, and felt conscious of rectitude and strength of mind. How cheaply we prize a gift which we imagine to be already in our power! With what philosophical indifference do we turn it on every side, depreciate its worth, magnify its disadvantages, and then pique ourselves upon the sobriety and justice of the estimate we have made! Thus it was with me in the present transaction. But, when I had received the check of the stranger, and saw the proposed benefit removed to a vast and uncertain distance, then it resumed all its charms. Then the contrast of wealth and poverty flashed full upon my soul. Before, I had questioned the reality of

the stranger's pretensions, and considered whether he might not be an artful impostor. But now all was clearness and certainty. The advantages of wealth passed in full review before my roused imagination. I saw horses, palaces and their furniture; I saw the splendour of exhibition and the trains of attendants, objects which had been for ever dear to my puerile imagination; I contemplated the honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, which are so apt to attend upon wealth, when disburfed with a moderate degree of dignity and munificence. When I compared this with my present poverty and desertion, the meanness of our appearance, our daily labours, the danger that an untoward accident might sink us in the deepest distress, and the hopelessness that my son or his posterity should ever rise to that honour and distinction to which they had once been

been destined, the effect was too powerful.

Another feeling came still further in aid of this. It was the humiliating impression which the stranger had left upon my mind. This seemed to be his great art, if in reality his conduct is to be imputed to art. There is no enemy to virtue so fatal as a sense of degradation. Self-applause is our principal support in every liberal and elevated act of virtue. If this ally can be turned against us, if we can be made to ascribe baseness, effeminacy, want of spirit and adventure to our virtuous resolutions, we shall then indeed feel ourselves shaken. This was precisely my situation. The figure I made in my own eyes was mean; I was impatient of my own degradation; I believed that I had shown myself uxorious and effeminate, at a time that must have roused in me the spirit of a man,

if



if there had been a spark of manly spirit latent in my breast. This impatience cooperated with the temptations of the stranger, and made me anxious to possess what he offered to my acceptance.

I reasoned thus with myself: What excites my scruples is simply the idea of having one single secret from my wife and family. This scruple is created by the singular and unprecedented confidence in which we have been accustomed to live. Other men have their secrets; nor do they find their domestic tranquillity broken by that circumstance. The merchant does not call his wife into consultation upon his ventures; the statesman does not unfold to her his policy and his projects; the warrior does not take her advice upon the plan of his campaign; the poet does not concert with her his flights and his episodes. To other men

men the domestic scene is the relaxation of their cares; when they enter it, they dismiss the business of the day, and call another cause. I only have concentrated in it the whole of my existence. By this means I have extinguished in myself the true energy of the human character. A man can never be respectable in the eyes of the world or in his own, except so far as he stands by himself and is truly independent. He may have friends; he may have domestic connections; but he must not in these connections lose his individuality. Nothing truly great was ever atchieved, that was not executed or planned in solitary seclusion.

But, if these reasons are sufficient to prove that the plan I have lately pursued is fundamentally wrong, how much more will the importance of what is proposed by the stranger, plead my excuse for deviating from it?

How bitterly have I lamented the degradation of my family ! Shall I not seize upon this opportunity of restoring them to their hereditary honours ? I deemed the ruin I had brought upon them irreparable ; shall I not embrace the occasion of atoning for my fault ? No man despises wealth, who fully understands the advantages it confers. Does it not confer the means of cultivating our powers ? Does it not open to us the career of honour, which is shut against the unknown and obscure ? Does it not conciliate the prepossessions of mankind, and gain for us an indulgent and liberal construction ? Does it not inspire us with graceful confidence, and animate us to generous adventure ? The poor man is denied every advantage of education, and wears out his life in labour and ignorance. From offices of trust, from opportunities of distinction, he is ignominiously

nominiouſly thruſt aſide ; and, though he ſhould ſacrifice his life for the public cauſe, he dies unhonoured and unknown. If by any accident he comes into poſſeſſion of thoſe qualities which, when diſcerned and acknowledged, command the applauſe of mankind, who will liſten to him ? His appearance is mean ; and the faſtidious auditor turns from him ere half his words are uttered. He has no equipage and attendants, no one to blow the trumpet before him and proclaim his rank ; how can he propoſe any thing that ſhall be worthy of attention ? Aware of the prepoſſeſſion of mankind in this reſpect, he is alarmed and overwhelmed with confuſion before he opens his mouth. Filled with the conſcience of his worth, he anticipates the unmerited contempt that is prepared to oppreſs him, and his very heart dies within him. Add to theſe circumſtances,  
the



the constitution of our nature, the various pleasures of which it is adapted to partake, and how many of these pleasures it is in the power of wealth to procure. Yes; an object like this will sufficiently apologise for me to those for whose sake alone it was estimable in my sight. It is indeed nothing but our poverty and the lowness of our station, that have thus produced in us an entire concurrence and communication of sentiments. Wealth would to a certain degree destroy our contact, and take off the wonder that we had each our thoughts that were not put into the common stock.

These considerations decided my choice. I was not indeed without some variations of mind, and some compunction of heart for the resolution I had espoused. The longer the stranger remained with me, the more evident it was that there was something  
mysterious

mysterious between us ; and the unre-served affection and union that had lately reigned under my roof, suffered materially the effects of it. The stranger had been led to my cottage in the first instance, by the entire solitude in which it was placed. There was nothing about which he was so solicitous as concealment ; the most atrocious criminal could not be more alarmed at the idea of being discovered. I was unable to account for this ; but I was now too anxious for his stay and the promised reward, not to be alert in gratifying all his wishes. The most inviolable secrecy therefore was enjoined to the whole family ; and the younger branches of it, particularly the little Marguerite, it was necessary to keep almost immured, to prevent the danger of their reporting any thing out of the house, that might be displeasing to the stranger, and fatal to my expectations. Upon the whole my situation was

was eminently an uneasy one. No experiment can be more precarious than that of a half-confidence; and nothing but the sincere affection that was entertained for me could have rendered it successful in this instance. My family felt that they were trusted by me only in points where it was impossible to avoid it, and that I was not therefore properly entitled to their co-operation; I was conscious of ingratitude in making them no return for their fidelity. They kept my secret because they were solicitous to oblige me, not from any conviction that they were conferring on me a benefit, but, on the contrary, suspecting that the object as to which they were blindly assisting me, would prove injurious to me, as well as to themselves.

The health of the stranger visibly declined; but this was a circumstance which he evidently regarded with complacency,

placency. It was the only source of consolation of which he appeared susceptible ; his mind was torn with painful remembrances, and agitated with terrible forebodings. He abhorred solitude, and yet found no consolation in society. I could not be much with him; my duty to my family who were principally supported by my labour, was a call too imperious to be neglected. Even when I was with him, he commonly testified no desire for conversation. Sit with me, he was accustomed to say; give me as much of your time as you can ; but do not talk. Upon these occasions, he would sit sometimes with his arms folded, and with the most melancholy expression imaginable. He would then knit his brows, wring his hands with a sadness that might have excited pity in the hardest breast, or, with both hands closed, the one clasping the other, strike himself impatiently



tiently on the forehead. At other times, he would rise from his seat, pace the room with hurried and unquiet steps, and then again throw himself on his couch in the greatest agitation. His features were often convulsed with agony. Often have I wiped away the sweat, which would suddenly burst out in large drops on his forehead. At those seasons he would continually mutter words to himself, the sense of which it was impossible for me to collect. I could perceive however that he often repeated the names of Clara!—Henry!—a wife!—a friend! a friend!—and then he would groan as if his heart were bursting. Sometimes, in the midst of these recollections, he would pass the back of his hand over his eyes; and then, looking at it, shaking his head, and biting his under lip, exclaim with a piteous accent, Dry!—dry! all the  
moisture

moisture of my frame is perished! Then, as if recovering himself, he would cry with a startled and terrified voice, Who is there? St. Leon? Come to me! Let me feel that there is a human being near me! I often call for you; but I find myself alone, deserted, friendless—friendless!

At times when his recollection was more complete, he would say, I know, I tire you! Why should I tire you? What gratification can it be to me to occasion emotions of disgust? Upon these occasions I endeavoured to soothe him, and assured him I found pleasure in administering to his relief. But he replied, No, no: do not flatter me! It is long since I have heard the voice of flattery! I never loved it! No, I know I am precluded from ever exciting friendship or sympathy! Why am I not dead? Why do I live, a burden to myself, useful to none? My secret,

secret, I could almost resolve, should die with me; but you have earned, and you shall receive it!

The stranger was not always in this state of extreme anguish, nor always indisposed to converse. He had lucid intervals; and could beguile the sorrow of his heart with social communication. We sometimes talked of various sciences and parts of learning; he appeared to be well informed in them all. His observations were ingenious; his language copious; his illustrations fanciful and picturesque; his manner bold and penetrating. It was easy to observe in him the marks of a vigorous and masculine genius. Sometimes we discussed the events at that time going on in the world. When we spoke of events that had passed, and persons that had died, more than a century before, the stranger often spoke of them in a manner as if

if he had been an eye-witness and directly acquainted with the objects of our discourse. This I ascribed to the vividness of his conceptions, and the animation of his language. He however often checked himself in this peculiarity; and always carefully avoided what could lead to any thing personal to himself. I described to him the scenes of my youth, and related my subsequent history; he on his part was invincibly silent on every circumstance of his country, his family and his adventures.

The longer I was acquainted with him, the more my curiosity grew. I was restless and impatient to learn something respecting a man who thus wrapped himself up in mystery and reserve. Often I threw out, as it were, a line by which to fathom his secret. I talked of various countries, I mentioned different kinds of calamities and



even of crimes, that by some incidental allusion I might discover at unawares his country, his connections, or the nature of his story. When any thing that offered seemed to promise to lead to the desired point, I doubled my questions, and endeavoured to construct them with the skill of a crafty litigant in a court of justice. There were some subjects, the very mention of which gave him uneasiness, and upon which he immediately silenced me; but these were not of themselves enough to afford me a clue, or to furnish materials out of which for me to construct the history of the stranger. He did not always perceive the drift of my questions and snares; but, when he did, he generally became loud, resentful and furious. There was nothing else that so completely roused his indignation.

St. Leon! said he to me one day, silence this inquisitive temper of yours,  
check

check your rash and rude curiosity! The only secret I have that can be of any importance to you, you shall one day know. But my country, my family, my adventures, I have once told you and I now tell you again, you shall never know. That knowledge can be of moment to no one, and it shall never be disclosed. When this heart ceases to beat, that tale shall cease to have a place on the face of the earth. Why should my distresses and disgraces be published to any one? Is it not enough, that they have lacerated my bosom, that they have deprived me of friends, that they have visited me with every adversity and every anguish, that they have bowed me down to the earth, that they have made thought and remembrance and life itself a burthen too heavy to be borne? Your present injudicious conduct, if persisted in, will have the effect of driving me from your roof, of turning me once more

upon the world, upon that world that I hate, upon that world whose bruises and ill treatment I feel in every fibre of my frame, of exposing me again to fresh persecutions, and causing me to perish miserably in a dungeon, or die upon a scaffold. Spare me, my generous host ; I know you are capable of generosity. Indeed I have endured enough to satiate the rage of malice itself. You see what I suffer from the rage and tempest of my own thoughts, even without the assistance of any external foe. Let me die in that degree of tranquillity I am able to attain ! I will not trouble you long !

At another time, he addressed me in a different style. You see, St. Leon, that the anguish of mind I endure is such as is ordinarily attributed to the recollection of great crimes ; and you have very probably conjectured that in my case it arises from the same source. If you have, I forgive you ; but I assure

sure you that you are mistaken. Take from yourself that uneasiness, if it has ever visited you ; you are not giving sanctuary to a villain ! I am innocent. I can take no crime to my charge. I have suffered more almost than man ever suffered ; but I have sinned little. The cause of my uneasiness and prime source of all my misfortunes, I dare not disclose to you. Be contented with the plan of my conduct. I have digested my purpose. I have determined where to speak and where to be silent.

The more I saw of this man, the more strange and unaccountable appeared to me every thing that related to him. Why was he so poor, possessing, as he pretended, inexhaustible wealth ? Why was he unhappy, with so great talents and genius, and such various information ? Why was he friendless, being, as he solemnly assured me, so perfectly innocent, and of con-



sequence so respectable? That he was an impostor, every thing that I saw of him forbade me to believe. His sorrows were too profound and excruciating, for it to be possible for me to rank them among the actions that a man may play. The greatness of his powers, the dignity of his carriage, the irresistible appearance of sincerity that sparkled in his eye, and modulated his voice, fully convinced me that he really was what he pretended to be. I had heard of men who, under the pretence of alchymy, fastened themselves upon persons possessing sums of money, and, beguiling them with a delusive expectation of wealth, reduced them to beggary and ruin. One such person I had had a brief connection with during my residence in the Bordelois, though, finding the incident by no means essential to the progress of my history, I have passed it over, together

together with many others, in silence. But nothing could be more unlike than that man and the person respecting whom I was now concerned. In reality I possessed at that time, if I may be allowed to say so, a more than common insight into the characters of mankind, so as to be little likely, except under the tyranny of passion, as in the instance of gaming, to be made the prey of imposition. I had studied my species as it exhibits itself in history, and had mixed with it in various scenes and under dissimilar aspects. I had accordingly, in the transaction I have just alluded to, soon detected the plans of the villain who expected to delude me. But what could be the purpose of the stranger in this respect? The pretended alchymist in France had obtained a certain sum of money of me, and demanded more. The stranger never made such a demand of me;

and perfectly knew that, even if I had been inclined, I was not able to supply him. The alchymist had amused me with descriptions of various processes for the transmutation of metals, had exhibited his crucibles and retorts, and employed a sort of dramatic *coup d'œil*, for the purpose of awakening my curiosity, and stimulating my passions. The stranger had simply stated, in the plainest and most direct manner, that it was in his power to enrich me; but had been silent as to the manner of producing the wealth he promised, and had abstained from every effort to intoxicate my mind. I felt therefore in this instance the effect, that, without being able to solve the difficulties and contrarieties that hung about him, I yet believed his assertions, nor was the inscrutability of his history and his motives capable of shaking my confidence.

One

One day, during the period of his concealment, certain officers of the bishop of Constance, accompanied by a foreigner in a Neapolitan habit, came to my house, and, as it proved, with the express purpose of searching for the man who had put himself under my protection. Charles and myself were at work in the fields within sight of the lake. Their appearance first caught the attention of Charles as they approached the shore, and he enquired of me respecting the appearance of the foreigner which was different from any he had been accustomed to see. While we were yet speaking, I observed in them an intention to land within sight of my cottage. This was an uncommon circumstance; our privacy was rarely invaded, and we lived almost as much out of the world as we should have done in the remotest island of the Atlantic ocean. I reasoned in my own



mind upon their appearance; they had little resemblance to a party of pleasure; the habit of the officers of justice I was perfectly acquainted with; and the suspicion of the real nature of their errand immediately darted on my thoughts. Without saying a word to Charles on the subject, I hastened with all the speed I could exert to the apartment of the stranger, and acquainted him with what I had seen. He concurred with me in the ideas I had formed, and appeared much shocked at the intelligence. There was however no time to be lost; and, after having for a moment given vent to an anguish, which was too powerful to be suppressed, he withdrew as hastily as he could from the summer-house, and betook himself to the woods. He recommended to me to leave him, telling me that he could conceal himself most effectually alone, and observing that it would be necessary for me to  
to

to meet the officers, and endeavour as much as possible to remove their suspicions.

Accordingly, as soon as he was gone, I threw open the windows of the summer-house, removed the shutters, and took from it, as effectually as I could, all appearance of having served as a place of concealment. This was a precaution which the stranger had in a former instance recommended to me. It fortunately happened that Julia and the little Marguerite were gone out together in the fields on the eastern side of my cottage; otherwise infallibly the child by her innocent prattle, and perhaps Julia by the apprehensive sensibility of her temper, would have betrayed our secret, or at least have suggested to the officers a feeling as if, by a longer stay and a more diligent search, they might possibly succeed in the object of their expedition.

pedition. As it was, I received them at the door, and learned from their own mouths, the nature of their errand. Of Charles, whom they had crossed in the fields, they had simply asked whether they were right as to the name of the person who was proprietor of the cottage before them. They described to me with great accuracy the appearance of the stranger, and insisted that he had been an inhabitant of my cottage. They told me, they were well informed that the summer-house in my garden had carefully been shut up for more than a month past, and that some person had been concealed there. I was interested in the distress of the stranger; I was impressed with the dignity of his character; I implicitly confided in his assertions of innocence and the unjust persecution that he suffered; I was not insensible to the proposed reward, the realising

realising of which probably depended on his safety. But, most of all, I considered my honour as pledged for the protection of the man who had thus cast himself upon my fidelity, and believed that I should be everlastingly disgraced if he suffered any evil through treachery or neglect on my part. I therefore answered confidently to the officers that they were misinformed, and offered to conduct them over every part of my house and demesnes, that they might satisfy themselves by personal inspection that there was no person concealed any where within my possessions. I should have been better pleased, openly to have defied their interrogatories, and to have asked them, whether, allowing their suspicions to be just, they were entitled to believe that I was such a villain, as to betray a man who had thrown himself upon my generosity? But, though  
this



this conduct would have had a greater appearance of gallantry, I believed it would have less of the reality, as it would have strengthened their idea of my participation, and increased the danger of the person I was bound to protect.

They accepted my offer of submitting to their search, and made a strict examination of every place about my habitation, in which the stranger could be concealed. Disappointed here, they endeavoured by threats to discover whether I was able to give them any information. To these I calmly answered, that they had mistaken my character, that, though I was a poor man, I had not forgotten that I was noble, that they were already in possession of my spontaneous answer to their enquiries, and that, in no case, and upon no supposition, should tyranny and ill-treatment extort from me,

me, what I was not in the first instance freely disposed to give. My wife was present during this conversation, and, I could perceive, felt an alarm for my danger, that she would have been incapable of feeling for a danger to herself.

Though I was extremely anxious that these men should be disappointed in the object of their expedition, yet I did not neglect this opportunity of endeavouring to obtain satisfaction for my own curiosity. I remarked at first that the Neapolitan was an inquisitor, and this circumstance had given additional poignancy to the uneasiness of Marguerite. But the accusations of which the inquisition at this time took cognisance were so numerous, the ecclesiastical power continually usurping upon the civil, that I was little assisted in the judgment I was desirous to frame, by any inference to be deduced from this circumstance. I questioned  
2 directly,

directly, with an air as if it were merely in the way of conversation, what was the crime of the man of whom they were in pursuit, and what was the cause forcible enough to induce a Neapolitan inquisitor to follow so decrepid and forlorn an individual as he described, beyond the Alps, and almost to the banks of the Danube? To this he answered roughly, that, though he was not able to discover the object of his search, he was by no means convinced that I was not his abettor and accomplice; and that, as to his crime, that was not to be named; the welfare of Christendom demanding, that the criminal, and the memory of his offences, should be buried together. At the same time he warned me to consider well what I did, before I exposed myself to be overwhelmed by the vengeance of the court of which he was a member. To this I answered haughtily,

haughtily, that I had already condescended to repel his suspicion, and that no other man than an inquisitor would have had the stupidity or the audaciousness to question my veracity. I added, that I was perfectly acquainted with the nature of his court, which was an object of abhorrence to the whole Christian world; but that he was much mistaken, if he supposed that the detestable nature of its proceedings would enable him to practise every sort of outrage with impunity. The officers withdrew into the little inclosure in front of my cottage, and I overheard them consulting whether, having failed in their principal object, they should carry me a prisoner along with them. The firmness of my manner however had awed them, and the fearlessness I expressed seemed to them to arise from a consciousness of innocence.



cence. They at length departed as they came.

I watched them from my cottage as they descended to the shore, and it was with no little pleasure that I at length perceived them reembark, and stand off for the opposite side of the lake. This spectacle for a time entirely engaged me, and, when I turned round from the door, I observed that my beloved Marguerite had been in tears. She endeavoured to hide this circumstance from my sight. I took her affectionately by the hand, and, pressing her to my bosom, intreated her not to make herself uneasy.

Ah, Reginald ! said she, how can I avoid being uneasy, when I see you exposed to this imminent danger ? I thought that, in forfeiting our fortune and our rank, and retiring to this obscure and sequestered situation, we might at least promise ourselves the blessing

blessing of the poor, oblivion and security ; and that should have consoled me for all I have lost. Who is this man, that is thus mysteriously hidden among us ? What is the guilt from the punishment of which he thus anxiously withdraws himself ? What can be the nature of your connection with such a man ? And what will be the issue of so perilous an adventure ?

I hesitated. I knew not what to answer to so earnest an anxiety. I was melted at the distress and the affection of Marguerite. She saw my embarrassment, and proceeded.

Mistake me not, my beloved ! said she. I have no desire to pry into what you are willing to conceal. Forgive the perturbation which has poured itself out in these involuntary questions. I repose an entire confidence in you. I would sooner die, than interfere with any object you have at heart. Go on according

according to the dictates of your own judgment, undisturbed by me. I will not doubt that you have sufficient reasons for what you communicate, and what you suppress. I am grieved indeed at the interruption of our obscure and unambitious tranquillity; but I had resolved not to trouble you with my uneasiness and apprehensions. The incident of this morning has extorted them from me; but I will behave better in future.

This scene was extremely distressing to me. My wife was oppressed with fears, and I had nothing to answer her: The consolations that rose up in my own mind, I was prevented from communicating. The more generously she confided in me, the more I felt the ungracious and disagreeable nature of the concealment I practised. I endeavoured however to encourage myself with the idea, that the labour would

would not be long, and the harvest would prove abundant. I said in my own mind, The worst is now over; the business has been commenced; the shock to my own family has actually occurred; I must go on resolutely, and shut my eyes to the temporarily displeasing circumstances that may be connected with the completing my object.



## CHAP. III.

**A**NOTHER source of uneasiness added itself to the distraction my mind already endured. The stranger did not appear. It was in the morning that the officers of justice arrived; they departed about noon; and in two hours afterwards I entered the wood in search of my guest. The wood was of some leagues in extent; it was intersected by paths in various directions; it was interspersed with caverns; its growth was of all kinds, in some places lofty trees that seemed to form a support for the clouds, in others an underwood impenetrable alike to the feet and to the eye. As I entered the wood, I however conceived that the discovery of the stranger, to me who was acquainted

acquainted with its lurking places, would be an affair of little toil; his feebleness and decrepitude would not suffer him to proceed to any great distance. In this however I was mistaken. I looked carefully on all sides; I examined every recess and corner with which I was acquainted; but I found no trace of the stranger. The scene was so complicated and involved that even this was a labour of considerable duration. At length I became satisfied that he was not in the nearer division of the wood.

I paused. I felt at once that it was little less than a Herculean task to hunt through the whole of its dimensions. It would probably be of little use to call, and endeavour by that means to discover his retreat. I knew of no name by which he was to be recognised; and, if my own voice was but a slight resource to penetrate this immense

menſe labyrinth of foliage, the voice of the ſtranger, weakened by age, and now probably ſtill more enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, could not be expected to make itſelf heard. Beſide which, as I knew not what the ſource of information had been to the officers who had juſt left me, I was unwilling to expoſe my gueſt to the danger that might ariſe from this mode of ſeeking him. I could not even be ſure, though I had ſeen their boat ſtand off from the ſhore, that they might not afterwards land one or more of their party, and be at this very moment within ear-ſhot of me. I therefore proceeded in anxiety and ſilence.

My ſearch was no more ſucceſſful in the part of the wood with which I was little acquainted, than in the part with which I was moſt familiar. I had already been engaged four hours in the taſk, and night began to come on.

It

It shut in with heavy clouds, that on all sides appeared deeply loaded with rain. I now began to consider my own situation; and, by comparing circumstances, found that I was at a great distance from my own habitation. There was no direct path by which for me to return. I had proceeded to the right and the left, backward and forward, sometimes by more open paths, and sometimes forcing my way through briars and brush-wood, as caprice or the hope of effecting the object of my search happened to guide me. It was therefore no easy matter to guess how I was to return, or even, now that the lowering clouds had covered the horizon with one uniform tint, in which direction lay the cottage or the lake. While I stood contemplating what was to be done, I heard the howling of the wolves at a distance, and their howl had that particular melancholy and dis-



comforting sound which is well known to precede a coming storm. There was no time to be lost, and accordingly I set out. I was less anxious to be at home on my own account, than for the sake of quieting the alarms of my family, to whom I had already occasioned too great a portion of uneasiness.

I had not proceeded far, before the rain descended in torrents, intermingled with peals of thunder and sheets of lightning. The thunder, interrupted, as it were, from time to time, with the noise of the wild beasts that inhabited the wood, deafened me, while the excessive and instantaneous brilliancy of the lightning occasioned me an intolerable aching in the organ of sight. It rained incessantly for two hours, and I found myself drenched and fatigued with the wet. During this time my progress was small; and

I was

I was ever and anon intercepted by the underwood, and could not without repeated experiments discover the means of proceeding. At length the rain subsided, and seemed to give place to a gloomy and motionless calm. Soon after, I discovered a light at a distance, and advanced towards it. As I approached, I perceived that it proceeded from a set of banditti, to the amount of fourteen or fifteen persons, sitting round a fire in the mouth of a cavern. I was glad to turn my steps another way, and was for some time afraid that the noise I made in occasionally forcing my way through the bushes, would alarm them, and cost me my life. I however fortunately escaped their notice. This was in a part of the wood remote from the path I ought to have taken, and near the road to Lindau.

The day began to dawn before I reached my own habitation. The conjecture I had made, when I was un-awares upon the point of falling into the hands of the banditti, that the road of Lindau was on the other side of their retreat, was of some service to me as an indication where to find the cottage and the lake. This road skirted the wood, on the side nearly opposite to that by which I entered it. The difficulties however I had to encounter were inconceivably great, in endeavouring to preserve my line of direction. After having been compelled four or five times to deviate from the line, it is seldom that a traveller will find himself right in his conjecture as to the direction he is pursuing, unless he has some sensible object as a sort of pole-star by which to govern his route. It happened however in this instance that I was more  
fortunate

fortunate than I was entitled to expect. I laboured indeed till day-break without getting out of the labyrinth that inclosed me. But the sun no sooner began to lend an imperfect light, than I recognised certain objects which upon some former occasions I had observed, and perceived that my journey was nearly at an end. I entered my cottage, and found Marguerite alone awake and expecting me.

She had been somewhat uneasy on account of my absence, both from the extreme tempestuousness of the night, and in consequence of the painful sensations the events of the preceding morning had introduced, events with which it was almost unavoidable for her to imagine that my absence was in some way connected. The period of my insanity in Switzerland might indeed have accustomed her to the irregularity of my motions, but a term of



more than six years which had intervened, had produced in her expectations and habits of a different sort. I related to this admirable woman the adventures of the night and the fruitlessness of the search in which I had been engaged; and this openness of communication, unresembling the nature of the intercourse which had lately existed between us, relieved in some degree my burthened heart, and cheered the drooping spirits of Marguerite. She dropped some sweet and sadly pleasing tears; and her manner seemed to say, though she would not suffer her tongue to give the idea words, How sweet are cordiality and confidence! Oh, do not let our situation, which has deprived us of many other comforts, ever again be robbed of this comfort, which is alone worth all the rest! Though she necessarily felt the presence of the stranger as an evil, the  
bane

bane of our domestic peace, yet it was impossible for her not to compassionate his fate, and suffer some distress from his strange and abrupt disappearance.

After the conversation which had so eminently served as a relief to our minds, Marguerite left me to repose myself from the extraordinary fatigue I had undergone. But my mind was too much disturbed to suffer me to sink into the arms of forgetfulness. I felt something tragical in the sad destiny of my unfortunate guest. It was but too probable that, in his peculiarly weak state of body, and with his declining health, the being thus exposed for a day and a night to the effects of hunger, of the inclemency of the air, and the tempestuousness of the elements, would put a close to his existence. I was determined soon to recommence my search. But how could I be sure that I should be more fortunate

nate to-day, than the day before? If I found him, it was most likely I should find him either dead or dying. The degree of intercourse that had taken place between us, had made him occupy a considerable space in my thoughts. The prospects he had opened to me, the conduct he had induced me to adopt, the painful effects and dissatisfaction of mind which had been produced by that conduct as it respected my family, all combined to give me an interest in his fate. I had seen his talents; I had felt his ascendancy; I had experienced that sort of conflict, which appearances of guilt on the one hand, and asseverations of innocence on the other, are calculated to produce in the thoughts and emotions of a by-stander. He was no common man; the expectations and conjectures he excited were of no ordinary sort; and I felt that an army might

might be destroyed, and a spacious plain covered with the wounded and the dying, without producing greater commotion in my soul.

In the anxious and disturbed state of mind in which I was, the thoughts flow with extraordinary rapidity. It will be found attended with a strange, and, previously to the experiment, incredible mixture of reasoning and passion, of philosophising and fury. I was accordingly conscious at this moment of the truth of the stranger's assertion, that in me he had a protector, not a friend. Friendship is an object of a peculiar sort; the smallest reserve is deadly to it. I may indeed feel the emotions of a friend towards a man who in part conceals from me the thoughts of his heart; but then I must be unconscious of this concealment. The instant I feel this limitation of confidence, he drops into the class of  
E 5 ordinary



ordinary men. A divorce is effected between us. Our hearts which grew together, suffer amputation; the arteries are closed; the blood is no longer mutually transfused and confounded. I shall be conscious of all his qualities, for I stand in the place of an impartial umpire. I consider him as a machine capable of so much utility to myself, and so much utility to other men. But I do not regard him as the brother of my soul. I do not feel that my life is bound up in his. I do not feel as if, were he to die, the whole world would be at an end to me, and that my happiness would be buried with him for ever in the darkness of the grave. I am not conscious of those emotions which are the most exquisite and indescribable the human mind can experience, and which, being communicated by a sort of electrical stroke to him who is their object, constitute the  
solace

folace of all his cares, the alleviator of all his calamities, the only nectar and truest balm of human life. For me, he stands alone in the world, having companions and associates, the connections, as it were, of mercantile selfishness, or casual jollity and good humour, but no friend. It was thus that I thought of the stranger. He obtained from me the compassion due to a human being, and the respect extorted by his qualities, but nothing calculated radically to disturb the equilibrium of my mind. I looked forward to his death with unruffled thoughts and an unmoistened eye. There was one thing indeed that shook me more deeply; the thought of losing the promised reward, and having exposed myself to the evil of an unquiet and dissatisfied mind in vain.

I rested but a few hours before I set out again upon the search, to which

the interposition of the darkness of the preceding night had put an abrupt close. I had the precaution to take with me a slight provision of food and cordials, believing that, if I found the stranger, he would at least be in the greatest need of something reviving and restorative. Charles earnestly intreated to assist me in the search, but upon this I put a peremptory prohibition. It would have been in direct contradiction to what the stranger had most solemnly required of me.

I had already spent several hours in anxiously tracing the wood in every direction, and the period of noon was past, when, approaching an obscure and almost impenetrable thicket, my ear was caught by a low and melancholy sound, which at first I knew not to what I was to ascribe. It however arrested my attention, and caused me to assume an attitude of listening.

After the lapse of little more than a minute, the same sound was repeated. I now distinctly perceived that it was the groan of some creature in a very feeble and exhausted state, and immediately suspected that it was the stranger. I went almost round the thicket before I could discern an entrance, and, though I looked with the utmost attention, could perceive nothing that the thicket inclosed. The groan was repeated a third time. The long intervals between the groans gave a peculiar melancholy to the effect, and each seemed so much lower than the groan before, that nothing but the ear of anxious attention would have caught it, at the same time that the tone conveyed an idea of stupified, yet vital, anguish. At length I perceived the legs and something of the garb of a man. It was the stranger! He appeared to have crept into the thicket  
upon



upon his hands and knees. When I forced my way to him, he seemed in the very act of expiring. He was lying on his face, and I raised him a little. His eyes were fixed; his mouth was open; his lips and tongue were parched and dry. I infused a few drops of a cordial into his mouth. For a moment it appeared to produce no sensation, but presently my patient uttered a deep and long-drawn sigh. I repeated my application. As a principal cause of the condition in which I found him was inanition, the stimulant I administered produced a powerful effect. He moved his hands, shuddered, turned his eyes languidly upon me, and, having appeared to recognise me, shut them hastily again. I moved him slowly and softly into a freer air, and bathed his temples with one of the liquids I had about me. By this time he looked up, and then suddenly round  
him

him with a wild and hurried air. He spoke not however; he was speechless. In about a quarter of an hour he relapsed into convulsions, in which it seemed probable he would expire. They lasted a considerable time, and he then sunk into a state of insensibility. I thought he was dead. Thus circumstanced, it was some relief to my humanity to have found him yet alive, and to have received his parting breath. But in a moment his secret and his promises recurred to me with inexpressible anguish, and I inwardly reproached him for having deferred his communication so long, as now to preclude its ever being made. I cannot describe the keenness, the burning and intolerable bitterness of my sensation. Keen it may well be supposed to be, from its having so instantaneously and forcibly recurred, at a time when other objects seemed to press

press upon my senses. No one who has not felt what it is to fall in a moment from hope, or, as I should rather say, from assured possession of what his soul most loved and desired, into black and interminable despair, can imagine what was then the state of my mind. The body of my patient slid from my nerveless arms; I lifted up the eyes of rage and frenzy as if to curse the author of my being; and then fell helpless and immoveable by the side of the stranger.

I felt him move. I heard him sigh: I lifted up my head, and perceived stronger marks of life and sense about him, than had yet displayed themselves. I threw my arms about him; I pressed him to my heart. The emphatical gesture I used, seemed to have a sort of magnetical force to rouse his dying powers. With a little assistance from me he sat upright. My assiduity  
produced

produced wonders. It fortunately happened that this thicket was but half a mile from my habitation, and indeed was one of the spots which I had searched without success the day before. About the hour of sun-set, partly by leading, and partly by supporting him, I restored my guest to his former apartment.

He remained speechless, or nearly so. He vented his sensations in sighs, in inward and inarticulate sounds, and, even when he arrived at the power of making himself understood by words, it was only by monosyllables and half-sentences that he conveyed to me his meaning. I now gave up my time almost entirely to an assiduous attendance on the stranger. Every day I expected to be his last; every day was more or less interspersed with symptoms that seemed to menace his instant dissolution. During all this time I remained  
in



in the anxious suspense of contending hope and fear. Was it probable that he would ever recover strength enough to confer on me the legacy he had announced? The particulars of his secret I knew not; but, judging from what I had heard of the pretences and pursuits of alchymy, it was natural to suppose that he had a process to communicate, which would require on his part considerable accuracy of recollection, as well as the power of delivering himself in a methodical and orderly discourse.

I was fortunate enough however to perceive, after a tormenting and tedious crisis, that he appeared to be in a progress of convalescence, and that his strength both of body and mind were recruited daily. After the lapse of a fortnight from the adventure of the wood, he one evening addressed me in the following manner :

St. Leon,

St. Leon, I have been to blame. I have put you to a sufficient trial; I have received from you every assistance and kindness that my situation demanded; I have imposed on you much trouble and anxiety; I have excited your expectations by announcing to you in part what it was in my power to bestow; and I have finally risked the defrauding your hopes and your humanity of their just reward. Do me the justice however to remember that I had no presentiment of that event which has so inauspiciously come between you and your hopes. Fool that I was, I imagined I had suffered enough, and that, as I had obtained a longer respite from external persecution than I almost ever experienced, I should be permitted to spend the short remainder of my days uninterrupted! I now however look back upon this last assault with complacency. It has cut  
off

off something from the last remnant of a life, to the close of which I look forward with inexpressible longing; at the same time that I am still in prospect of obtaining the final wish of my heart, the stealing out of the world unperceived, and thus in some measure eluding the last malice of my enemies. After my death I have but one injunction to leave with you, the injunction of Hercules to Philoctetes, that no inducement may move you to betray to mortal man the place in which you shall have deposited my ashes. Bury them in a spot which I will describe to you; it is not far, and is only recommended to me by its almost inaccessible situation: and that once done, speak of me, and, if possible, think of me no more. Never on any account mention me or allude to me; never describe me, or relate the manner of our meeting, or the adventure which  
has

has at length brought on the desired close of my existence.

Believe me, in the feeble and helpless condition in which I have spent the last fortnight, your wishes and expectations have been uppermost in my mind, and there is nothing I have felt with so much compunction as the danger of leaving them unsatisfied. To you perhaps I at present appear to be rapidly recovering. I feel the dart of death in my vitals ; I know I shall not live four days. It is necessary therefore that I should finish without delay all that remains for me to finish. I will devote this night to the arranging my thoughts and putting in order what I have to communicate, that no mistake or omission may have part in a transaction so important. Come to me to-morrow morning ; I will be prepared for you.

As



As soon as I had heard this discourse, and provided the stranger with every thing he could want during the night, I withdrew. My heart was big with expectation ; my thoughts all night were wild and tumultuous. When the hour of assignation arrived, I hastened along the garden to the summer-house, conscious that upon that hour depended all the colour of my future life. Since the stranger had been in his present dangerous condition, the door was not bolted. It was only locked : the key was in my possession, and remained night and day attached to my person. I opened the door ; I panted and was breathless.

I immediately saw that the stranger had undergone some great alteration for the worse. He had suffered a sort of paralytic affection. He lifted up his face as I entered ; it was paler than I had ever seen it. He shook his head mournfully,

mournfully, and intimated by signs the disappointment which this morning must witness. He was speechless. Fate, fate ! exclaimed I in an agony of despair, am I to be for ever baffled ! Is the prize so much longed for and so ardently expected at last to escape me !——It is not to be imagined how much these successive, endless disappointments increased my impatience, and magnified in my eyes the donation I fought.

The whole of this and the following day the stranger remained speechless. The third day in the morning, he murmured many sounds, but in a manner so excessively inarticulate, that I was not able to understand one word in six that he said. I recollected his prediction that he should die on the fourth day. The fever of my soul was at its height. Mortal sinews and fibres could sustain no more. If the stranger  
had

had died thus, it is most probable that I should have thrown myself in anguish and rage upon his corpse, and have expired in the same hour.

In the evening of the third day I visited him again. He had thrown his robe around him, and was sitting on the side of his couch. The evening sun shot his last beams over the window-shutters. There were about eight inches between the shutter and the top of the window; and some branches of vines, with their grapes already ripe, broke the uniformity of the light. The side of the couch faced the west, and the beams played upon the old man's countenance. I had never seen it so serene. The light already softened by the decline of day, gave it a peculiar animation; and a smile that seemed to betoken renovation and the youth of angels, sat upon it. He beckoned me to approach. I  
sat

sat beside him on the couch ; he took my hand in his, and leaned his face towards me.

I shall never witness the light of the setting sun again ! were the first words he uttered. I immediately perceived that he spoke more collectedly and with better articulation, than at any time since the paralytic stroke. Still however it was no easy matter to develop his words. But I wound up every faculty of my frame to catch them ; and, assisted as I was by the habit of listening to his speech for many weeks, which during the whole of that time had never been distinct, I was successful enough to make out his entire discourse.

It continued, though with various interruptions, for more than half an hour. He explained with wonderful accuracy the whole of his secrets, and the process with which they were con-



nected. My soul was roused to the utmost stretch of attention and astonishment. His secrets, as I have already announced in the commencement of this history, consisted of two principal particulars, the art of multiplying gold, and the power of living for ever. The detail of these secrets I omit; into that I am forbidden to enter. My design in writing this narrative, I have said, is not to teach the art of which I am in possession, but to describe the adventures it produced to me.

The more I listened, the more my astonishment grew. I looked at the old man before me; I observed the wretchedness of his appearance, the meanness of his attire, his apparent old age, his extreme feebleness, the characters of approaching death that were written on his countenance. After what I had just heard, I surveyed these

these things with a sensation of novelty, as if I had never remarked them in him before. I said to myself, Is this the man, that possesses mines of wealth inexhaustible, and the capacity of living for ever?

Observing that he had finished his discourse, I addressed to him these words, by a sort of uncontrollable impulse, and with all the vehemence of unsated and unsuppressible curiosity :

Tell me, I adjure you by the living God, what use have you made of these extraordinary gifts, and with what events has that use been attended?

As I spoke thus, the countenance of the old man underwent a surprising change. Its serenity vanished; his eyes rolled with an expression of agony; and he answered me thus :

Be silent, St. Leon! How often must I tell you that no single incident of my story shall ever be repeated!

Have I no claim upon your forbearance? Can you be barbarous and inhuman enough to disturb my last scene with these bitter recollections?—I was silent.

This is all that is material, that passed at our interview.

The stranger died the next day, and was buried according to his instructions.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

FROM the moment of my last interview with the stranger I was another creature. My thoughts incessantly rolled upon his communications. They filled me with astonishment and joy, almost to bursting. I was unable to contain myself; I was unable to remain in any posture or any place. I could scarcely command myself sufficiently to perform the last duties to his body in the manner he had directed. I paced with eager steps the sands of the lake; I climbed the neighbouring hills, and then descended with inconceivable rapidity to the vales below; I traced with fierce impatience the endless mazes of the wood in which



I so hardly recovered my bewildered guest. The uninterruptedness and swiftness of bodily motion seemed to communicate some ease to my swelling heart.

Yet there was one thing I wanted. I wanted some friendly bosom into which to pour out my feelings, and thus by participation to render my transports balsamic and tolerable. But this was for ever denied me. No human ear must ever be astonished with the story of my endowments and my privileges. I may whisper it to the woods and the waters, but not in the face of man. Not only am I bound to suppress the knowledge of the important secrets I possess, but even the feelings, the ruminations, the visions, that are for ever floating in my soul. It is but a vain and frivolous distinction upon which I act, when I commit to this paper my history, and not the science

science which is its corner-stone. The reason why the science may not be divulged, is obvious. Exhaustless wealth, if communicated to all men, would be but an exhaustless heap of pebbles and dust; and nature will not admit her everlasting laws to be so abrogated, as they would be by rendering the whole race of sublunary man immortal. But I am bound, as far as possible, not only to hide my secrets, but to conceal that I have any to hide. Senseless paper! be thou at least my confident! To thee I may impart, what my soul spurns the task to suppress. The human mind insatiably thirsts for a confident and a friend. It is no matter that these pages shall never be surveyed by other eyes than mine. They afford at least the semblance of communication and the unburthening of the mind; and I will press the illusion fondly and for ever to my heart.

To return to the explanation of my feelings immediately after receiving possession of my grand acquisition; for, without that explanation, the spirit and meaning of my subsequent narrative will scarcely be sufficiently apprehended.

Happy, happy, happy man! exclaimed I in the midst of my wanderings and reveries. Wealth! thy power is unbounded and inconceivable. All men bow down to thee; the most stubborn will is by thee rendered pliant as wax; all obstacles are melted down and dissolved by the ardour of thy beams! The man that possesses thee, finds every path level before him, and every creature burning to anticipate his wishes! But, if these are the advantages that wealth imparts to such as possess only those scanty portions which states and nations allow to the richest, how enviable must his condition be,

be, whose wealth is literally exhaustless and infinite! He possesses really the blessing, which priestcraft and superstition have lyingly pronounced upon the charitable. He may give away the revenues of princes, and not be the poorer. He possesses the attribute which we are accustomed to ascribe to the creator of the universe. He may say to a man, Be rich, and he is rich. He can bestow with equal facility the smallest gifts and the greatest. Palaces, as if they were the native exhalations of the soil, rise out of the earth at his bidding. He holds the fate of nations and of the world in his hand. He can remove forests, and level mountains, drain marshes, extend canals, turn the course of rivers, and shut up the sea with doors. He can assign to every individual in a nation the task he pleases, can improve agriculture and establish manufactures, can found

F 5

schools,



schools, and hospitals, and infirmaries, and universities. He can study the genius of every man, and enable every man to pursue the bent of his mind. Poets and philosophers will be fostered, the sublimest flights of genius be produced, and the most admirable discoveries effected, under his auspicious patronage. The whole world are his servants, and he, if his temper be noble and upright, will be the servant of the whole world. Nay, it cannot happen otherwise. He has as few temptations to obliquity as omnipotence itself. Weakness and want are the parents of vice. But he possesses every thing; he cannot better his situation; no man can come into rivalry or competition with him. I thank God, I have known the extremes of poverty, and therefore am properly qualified to enjoy my present happiness. I have felt a reverse of fortune, driving

driving me in one instance to insanity; in another instance threatening to destroy me, my wife and children together, with the plague of hunger. My heart has been racked with never-dying remorse, because, by my guilt and folly, my children have been deprived of the distinction and rank to which they were born, and plunged in remediless obscurity. Heaven has seen my sufferings, and at length has graciously said, It is enough. Because I have endured more than man ever endured from the privation of fortune, God in his justice has reserved for me this secret of the transmutation of metals. I can never again fall into that wretchedness, by which my understanding was subverted, and my heart was broken.

From this part of the legacy of the stranger, my mind reverted to the other. I surveyed my limbs, all the

F 6

joints

joints and articulations of my frame with curiosity and astonishment. What ! exclaimed I, these limbs, this complicated, but brittle frame, shall last for ever ! No disease shall attack it ; no pain shall seize it ; death shall withhold from it for ever his abhorred grasp ! Perpetual vigour, perpetual activity, perpetual youth, shall take up their abode with me ! Time shall generate in me no decay, shall not add a wrinkle to my brow, or convert a hair of my head to grey ! This body was formed to die ; this edifice to crumble into dust ; the principles of corruption and mortality are mixed up in every atom of my frame. But for me the laws of nature are suspended ; the eternal wheels of the universe roll backward ; I am destined to be triumphant over fate and time !

Months, years, cycles, centuries !  
To me all these are but as indivisible moments.

moments. I shall never become old ; I shall always be, as it were, in the porch and infancy of existence ; no lapse of years shall subtract any thing from my future duration. I was born under Louis the Twelfth ; the life of Francis the First now threatens a speedy termination ; he will be gathered to his fathers, and Henry his son will succeed him. But what are princes and kings and generations of men to me ? I shall become familiar with the rise and fall of empires ; in a little while the very name of France, my country, will perish from off the face of the earth, and men will dispute about the situation of Paris, as they dispute about the scite of ancient Nineveh and Babylon and Troy. Yet I shall still be young. I shall take my most distant posterity by the hand ; I shall accompany them in their career ; and, when they are worn out and exhausted, shall shut



shut up the tomb over them, and set forward.

There was something however in this part of my speculation that did not entirely please me. Methought the race of mankind looked too insignificant in my eyes. I felt a degree of uneasiness at the immeasurable distance that was now put between me and the rest of my species. I found myself alone in the world. Must I for ever live without a companion, a friend, any one with whom I can associate upon equal terms, with whom I can have a community of sensations, and feelings, and hopes, and desires, and fears? I experienced something, less than a wish, yet a something very capable of damping my joy, that I also were subject to mortality. I could have been well contented to be partaker with a race of immortals, but I was not satisfied to be single in this respect.

respect. I was not pleased to recollect how trivial would appear to me those concerns of a few years, about which the passions of men are so eagerly occupied. I did not like the deadness of heart that seemed to threaten to seize me. I began to be afraid of vacancy and torpor, and that my life would become too uniformly quiet. Nor did it sufficiently console me, to recollect that, as one set of friends died off the stage, another race would arise to be substituted in their stead. I felt that human affections and passions are not made of this transferable stuff, and that we can love nothing truly, unless we devote ourselves to it heart and soul, and our life is, as it were, bound up in the object of our attachment.

It was worse when I recollected my wife and my children. When I considered for the first time that they were now in a manner nothing to me, I felt a  
sensation

sensation that might be said to mount to anguish. How can a man attach himself to any thing, when he comes to consider it as the mere plaything and amusement of the moment! In this statement however I am not accurate. Habit is more potent than any theoretical speculation. Past times had attached me deeply, irrevocably to all the members of my family. But I felt that I should survive them all. They would die one by one, and leave me alone. I should drop into their graves the still renewing tear of anguish. In that tomb would my heart be buried. Never, never, through the countless ages of eternity, should I form another attachment. In the happy age of delusion, happy and auspicious at least to the cultivation of the passions, when I felt that I also was a mortal, I was capable of a community of sentiments and a going forth of the heart. But  
how

how could I, an immortal, hope ever hereafter to feel a serious, an elevating and expansive passion for the ephemeron of an hour!

As the first tumult of my thoughts subsided, I began, as is usual with persons whose minds are turned loose in the search of visionary happiness, to picture to myself, more steadily and with greater minuteness, the objects I would resolve early to accomplish. I would in the first place return to France, my adored country, the residence of my ancestors, whose annals they had adorned, whose plains had witnessed their heroic feats, and whose earth inclosed their ashes. To France I was endeared by every tie that binds the human heart; her language had been the prattle of my infancy; her national manners and temper were twined with the fibres of my constitution, and could not be rooted out; I felt



felt that every Frenchman that lived was my brother. Banishment had only caused these prejudices to strike their tendrils deeper in my heart. I knew not that I should finally limit my abode to France. A man who, like Melchisedec, is "without end of life," may well consider himself as being also like him "without father, without mother, and without descent." But, at all events, I would first fix my children, who did not participate in my privileges, in their native soil. I would reside there myself, at least till they were fully disposed of, and till the admirable partner of the last seventeen years of my life had resigned her breath. I would immediately repurchase the property of my ancestors, which had been so distressfully resigned. The exile should return from his seven year's banishment in triumph and splendour. I would return to the court of my old patron and friend, the gallant Francis, and

and present to him my boy, the future representative of my family, now one year older than I had been at the field of the Cloth of Gold. Though an exile from my country, I had not been an inattentive witness of her fortunes. The year fifteen hundred and forty-four was a remarkable and interesting year in the history of France. The endless animosities of Francis and the emperor had broken out with new fury about two years before. In the spring of the present year, the count d'Anguien had won a battle in Piedmont \*, in which ten thousand Imperialists were left dead upon the field, and which might be considered as having at length effaced the defeat of Pavia, in the same part of the world nineteen years before. The moment it had been announced that a battle was resolved on, the young nobility of France, with their charac-

\* The battle of Cerifolles.

teristic ardour, had hurried to the scene, and the court of Paris was, in an instant as it were, turned into a desert. On the other hand the emperor and the king of England had concerted for the same season a formidable plan of attack against our northern frontier. With an army of twenty-five thousand men respectively, the one on the side of Champagne, and the other of Picardy, they agreed to advance directly into the heart of the kingdom, and to unite their forces in the neighbourhood of Paris. The last intelligence that had reached me, was, that Chateau Thierry, about twenty leagues from the metropolis, was in the hands of the emperor, and that the inhabitants of the capital, filled with consternation, were seeking their safety by flight in every direction. These circumstances had passed idly by me, and left little impression, so long as I considered myself as an obscure peasant,

peasant, cut off for ever from the bosom of my country. But, vested with the extraordinary powers now intrusted to me, the case was altered. I felt even a greater interest in my sovereign, now pressed down with disease and calamity, yet retaining the original alacrity and confidence of his soul, than I had done, when I saw him in all the pride of youth, and all the splendour of prosperity. I was anxious that Charles should now enter into his service; and I determined once again to assume the cuirass and the faulchion, that I might be the instructor of his youth, and his pattern in feats of war. I resolved that my shepherd-boy, bred in obscurity among the woods and mountains, should burst with sudden splendour upon his countrymen, and prove in the field his noble blood and generous strain. I also proposed to myself, both out of sympathy for my  
king,



king, and to give greater eclat to my son's entrance into life, to replenish with my treasures the empty coffers of France, and thus to furnish what at this period seemed to be the main spring upon which the fortune of war depended. With the advantages I could afford him, the career of Charles could not fail to be rapid and illustrious, and he would undoubtedly obtain the staff of constable of France, the possessor of which, Montmorency, was now in disgrace. I would marry my daughters to such of the young nobility, as I should find most distinguished in talents, and most spotless in character. When, by the death of her I most loved, my affections should be weaned from my country, and the scenes to which I had been accustomed were rendered painful and distressing, I would then set out upon my travels. I would travel with such splendour  
and

and profusion of expence (for this, though mortified in me by a reverse of many years duration, continued to be the foible of my heart) as should supersede the necessity of letters of recommendation, and secure me a favourable reception wherever I appeared. I might spend a life, in a manner, in every country that was fortunate enough to allure my stay, spreading improvements, dispensing blessings, and causing all distress and calamity to vanish from before me.

## CHAP. V.

**M**Y mind was occupied in these and similar reveries for several weeks after the death of the stranger. My wife and children had hoped, after that event, that I should have returned to the habits which had pervaded the last six years of my existence, and which they had felt so eminently productive of gratification and delight. In this hope they found themselves deceived. My domestic character was, for the present at least, wholly destroyed. I had a subject of contemplation that did not admit of a partaker, and from this subject I could not withdraw my thoughts, so much as for an instant. I had no pleasure but in that retirement,

ment, where I could be unseen and unheard by any human eye or ear. If at any time I was compelled to join the domestic circle, I dispatched the occasion that brought me there as speedily as possible; and even while I remained in it, was silent and absent, engrossed with my own contemplations, and heedless and unobservant of every thing around me.

My abstraction was not however so entire as to prevent me from sometimes stealing, in a sort of momentary interregnum of thought, in that pause where the mind rests upon the chain already passed over, and seems passively to wait for the sequel, a glance at my family. I looked at them, without knowing what it was that I did, and without the intention to notice what I saw. Yet, even in this state of mental abstraction, visible objects will sometimes succeed in making their impres-



sion. I perceived that my wife and children suffered from my behaviour. I remarked a general air of disconsolateness, and a mild unexpostulating submission to what nevertheless the heart deeply deplored. They did not presume to interrupt me; they did not by prying and inquisitive speeches attempt to extort from me the secret of the alteration they saw; but it was manifest they conceived some great and radical calamity had poisoned the heart of our domestic joy.

It was these symptoms thus remarked by me, that first roused me from the inebriation of my new condition. I was compelled to suspect that, while I revelled in visions of future enjoyment, I was inflicting severe and unmerited pains on those I loved. It was necessary, if I valued their happiness, that I should descend from the clouds  
of

of speculation and fancy, and enter upon the world of realities.

But here I first found a difficulty to which, during the reign of my intoxication, I had been utterly insensible. I was rich; I could raise my family, as far as the power of money extended, money which may in some sense be styled the empress of the world, to what heights I pleased. I had hitherto committed the fault, so common to projectors, of looking only to ultimate objects and great resting-places, and neglecting to consider the steps between. This was an omission of high importance. Every thing in the world is conducted by gradual process. This seems to be the great principle of harmony in the universe. Nothing is abrupt; one thing is so blended and softened into another, that it is impossible to say where the former ends and the latter begins.

This remark is fully applicable to the situation which was now before me. Yesterday I was poor ; to-day I was possessor of treasures inexhaustible. How was this alteration to be announced ? To dissipate the revenues of princes, to purchase immense estates, to launch into costly establishments, are tasks to which the most vulgar mind is equal. But no man stands alone in the world, without all trace of what he has been, and with no one near that thinks himself entitled to scrutinise his proceedings and his condition. Least of all was this my case. I was bound to certain other persons by the most sacred of all obligations ; I could not separate myself from them ; I could not render myself a mere enigma in their eyes ; though, in the language of the world, the head of my family, they were my natural censors and judges. I was accountable to them for my conduct ;

duct ; it was my duty, paramount to all other duties, to stand as a fair, upright and honourable character in their eyes.

If these remarks be true taken in a general view, they are much more so, when applied to my particular case. There are men who live in the midst of their families, like an eastern despot surrounded with his subjects. They are something too sacred to be approached ; their conduct is not to be reasoned upon ; the amount of their receipts and disbursements is not to be inspected ; their resources are unknown ; no one must say to them, What dost thou ? or, why hast thou thus conducted thyself ? Even these persons will not escape the tax to which all men are liable. They cannot kill the general spirit of enquiry ; the mystery in which they wrap themselves will often serve as an additional stimu-



lus; they will finally encounter the judgment and verdict of all. For myself, I had lived in the midst of my family upon a system of paternal and amicable commerce. I had suffered too deeply from a momentary season of separation and mystery, not to have been induced to renounce it decisively and for ever.

Firm however as I had imagined my renunciation to have been, I was now thrown back upon what I had most avoided. I had a secret source of advantage, the effects of which were to be participated by those I loved, while the spring was to remain for ever unknown. What I most sought upon this occasion, was, that my family should share my good fortune, and at the same time be prevented from so much as suspecting that there was any thing mysterious connected with it. To effect this, I presently conceived that

that it would be necessary, to sacrifice the sudden and instantaneous prosperity I had proposed to myself, and introduce the reverse of our condition by slow and, as far as possible, insensible degrees.

One thing on which I determined, preparatory to the other measures I had in view, was to remove from my present habitation, and take up my residence for a time in the city of Constance. In the cottage of the mountains it was impossible to make any material alteration in my establishment. My property was of narrow extent, nor would it be easily practicable in a country, the inhabitants of which were accustomed to an equal allotment, considerably to enlarge it. My house was small; and, unless it were first pulled down and built over again, the attempt to introduce servants, equipage or splendour into it,

would be ridiculous. My design was not to make a long abode where I now was ; but, as soon as my family should be sufficiently prepared for the transition, to return to my native country. I believed that, in the capital of the bishopric, where my name was scarcely remembered by a single individual, I should be more at liberty to proceed as circumstances suggested, than in my present rural situation, where every neighbour regarded himself as vested with a sort of inquisitorial power over all around him.

To account for this measure to my family, I felt it incumbent on me to confess to them a certain pecuniary acquisition. The story that most readily suggested itself was that of the stranger having left behind him a certain sum of which he made a donation to me. This, though in the plain and direct sense of the terms it were false,

yet

yet in its spirit bore a certain resemblance to the truth; and, with that resemblance, in spite of the rigid adherence to veracity, that first ornament of a gentleman, that most essential prerequisite to the regard and affection of others, which I had hitherto maintained, I was induced to content myself. What could I do? I was compelled to account for appearances; I was forbidden by the most solemn injunctions to unfold the truth. I should indeed have felt little complacence in the disclosure; I should have been reluctant to announce a circumstance, which, as I already began to feel, introduced a permanent difference and separation between me and my family.

The sum at which I fixed the legacy of the stranger was three thousand crowns. I was not inattentive to the future; I should have been glad, by my present account, to have furnished



a more ample solution for circumstances which might occur hereafter. But some regard was to be paid to probability. An unknown, a solitary man, broken with age, who arrived on foot, and who declined all aid and attendance, must not be represented as possessing mines of treasure.

It was some time before I could prevail on myself to break my story to the inhabitants of my cottage. As the time approached when I was to bid an everlasting farewell to rural obscurity and a humble station, they seemed to adorn themselves in new charms. I was like the son of a king, who had hitherto been told by his attendants that he was a mere villager, and who, while his youthful imagination is dazzled by the splendour that awaits him, yet looks back with a wistful eye upon his mirthful sports, his former companions, and the simple charms of her who

who first obtained his guileless love. I announced my acquisition and my purpose with a faltering tongue and a beating heart.

I could perceive that my tale produced few emotions of pleasure in those who heard it. Julia and her mother especially were warmly attached to their retirement, and the scenes which had witnessed so many pleasurable incidents and emotions. Chagrin, in spite of themselves, made a transient abode upon their countenances; but the unresisting mildness of the one, and the considerate attachment of the other, prevented for the present their sensations from breaking out into words. The feelings however that they consigned to silence, did not entirely escape the notice of the lively little Marguerite. She sympathised with them, probably without being aware that they were sad. She came

G 6

towards

towards me, and, with much anxiety in her enquiring face, asked why we must go away from the cottage? If I had got some money, I might go to the town, and buy some sweetmeats, and ribbands, and new clothes, and a hundred more pretty things, and bring them home. For her part, she should be better pleased to put on her finery and make her feast in the pretty, old summer-house, now she was again permitted to go and play in it, than in a palace all stuck over with emeralds and rubies. Her mother wiped away a tear at the innocent speech of her darling, kissed her, and bid her go and feed the hen and her chickens. Charles was the only one in whom I could observe any pleasure at my intelligence. He was not as yet skilful enough to calculate the advantages that three thousand crowns could purchase. But I could see joy sparkle in his eyes, as I announced

announced my intention of bidding adieu to retirement, and taking up my rest in the capital of the district. His veins swelled with the blood of his ancestors ; his mind was inured to the contemplation of their prowess. Already sixteen years of age, he had secretly burned to go forth into the world, to behold the manners of his species, and to establish for himself a claim to some rank in their estimation. He had pined in thought at the mediocrity of our circumstances, and the apparent impossibility of emerging ; for he regarded the duty of contributing his labour to the subsistence of the family, as the first of all obligations, and the more the bent of his spirit struggled against it, the more resolutely he set himself to comply.

The rest of the family were no sooner retired to rest, than Marguerite, finding in what I had just announced  
to



to all an occasion from the use of which she could not excuse herself, took this opportunity of unburthening the grief which had long been accumulating in her mind.

St. Leon, said she, listen kindly to what I am going to say to you, and assure yourself that I am actuated by no spleen, resentment or ill-humour, but by the truest affection. I perceive I have lost, in your apprehension, the right of advising you. I am no longer the partner of your counsels; I am no longer the confident of your thoughts. You communicate nothing but what you cannot suppress, and that you communicate to your whole family assembled. Heaven knows how dear to me is every individual of that family! But my love for them does not hide from me what is due to myself. I know that a husband, who felt as a husband ought, and, give me leave to  
I say,

say, as I have deserved you should feel towards me, could not have acted as you have acted to-night.

You must excuse my reminding you of some things which you seem to have forgotten. I would not mention them, if they had not been forgotten when they ought to have been remembered. I have lived seventeen years with you ; my whole study has been your advantage and pleasure. Have you any thing to reproach me with ? Point out to me, if in any thing I could have added to your pleasure, and have neglected it ! What I have done, has not been the ceremonious discharge of a duty ; it has been the pure emanation of an attachment that knew no bounds. I have passed with you through good fortune and ill fortune. When we were rich, I entered with my whole heart into your pleasures, because they were yours. When we  
were

were poor, I endured every hardship without a murmur; I watched by you, I consoled you, I reconciled you to yourself. I do not mean to make a merit of all this: no, Reginald! I could not have acted otherwise if I would.

Do me the justice to recollect that I have not been a complaining or irritable companion. In all our adversities, in the loss of fortune and the bitter consequences of that loss, I never uttered a reproachful word. What poverty, sorrow, hunger and famine never extorted from me, you have at length wrung from my bleeding heart. St. Leon! I have known your bosom thoughts. In no former instance has your affection or your confidence been alienated from me, and they consoled me for all the rest. But now, for three months the case has been entirely altered. You have during all that time  
been

been busy, penfive and agitated; but I have been as much a stranger to your meditations as if I had never been accustomed to be their depository. You have not scrupled to inflict a wound upon me that no subsequent change will ever be able to cicatrise. Nor indeed do I see any likelihood of a change. You announce our removal to Constance; what we are to do next, with what views, or for what purpose, I am ignorant.

I have made my election. My heart is formed for affection, and must always feel an uneasy void and desolation without it. If you had thus robbed me of your attachment in an early period of our intercourse, I know not upon what extremity my disappointment and anguish might have driven me. They are harder to bear now; but I submit. It is too late either for relief or remedy. What remains of  
my



my powers and my strength I owe to my children. I will not seduce them from their father. They may be benefited by his purse or his understanding, though, like me, they should be deprived of his affection. You may be their friend when I am no more. I feel that this will not last long. I feel that the main link that bound me to existence cannot be snapped, and thus snapped by unkindness worse than death, without promising soon to put a period to my miseries. I shall be your victim in death, after having devoted my life to you, in a way in which few women were ever devoted to their husbands.

But this is not what I purposed chiefly to say. This is what my situation and my feelings have unwillingly wrung from me. Though you have injured me in the tenderest point, I still recollect what you were to me. I  
still

still feel deeply interested in your welfare, and the fair fame you are to transmit to your children. I intreat you then to reflect deeply, before you proceed further. You seem to me to stand upon a precipice; nor do the alteration that has taken place in your manners, and the revolution of your heart, lead me to augur favourably of the plans you have formed. What is this stranger? Whence came he? Why did he hide himself, and why was he pursued by the officers of justice? Had he no relations? Was his bequest of the sum he had about him his own act, and who is the witness to its deliberateness or its freedom? You must not think that the world is inattentive to the actions of men or their circumstances; if it were, the fame we prize would be an empty bauble. No, sir, a fair fame can only be secured by unequivocal proceedings. What will, what

what can be thought of your giving shelter to an unknown, a man accused of crimes, a man never beheld even by an individual of your own family, and, upon the strength of whose alleged bequest, you are about to change the whole mode of your life?

Nor, Reginald, must you think me credulous enough to imagine that you have now disclosed the whole or the precise truth. Three thousand crowns is not a sum sufficient to account for what you propose, for the long agitation of your thoughts, or for the change of character you have sustained. You must either be totally deprived of rational judgment, or there must be something behind, that you have not communicated. What do you purpose in going to reside in the midst of a city, foreign to the manners of a Frenchman, distracted with internal broils, and embittered to us by the recollection of the

the

the extremities we personally suffered in it? Is your ambition sunk so low, that it can be gratified by such a transition? No; you mean more than you have announced; you mean something you are unwilling to declare. Consider that meaning well! Put me out of the question! I am nothing, and no longer desire to be any thing. But do not involve yourself in indelible disgrace, or entail upon your memory the curses of your children!

What a distress was mine, who, in return to so generous and noble an exhortation, could impart no confidence, and indulge no sincerity! I felt a misery, of which, till this hour, I had been unable to form a conception. Fool that I was, I had imagined that, when endowed with the bequests of the stranger, no further evil could approach me! I had, in my visionary mood, created castles and palaces, and expatiated



expatiated in the most distant futurity; and here I was, stopped and disappointed at the threshold, in the very first step of my proceedings! What I could however, I did; I poured forth to Marguerite, not the secrets of my understanding, but the overpowering emotions of my soul.

Best, most adorable of women! cried I, how you rend my heart with the nobleness of your remonstrances? Never was man blessed with a partner so accomplished and exemplary as I have been! Do you think your merits can ever be obliterated from my memory? Do you think the feeling of gratitude and admiration can ever be weakened in my bosom, or that the strength and singleness of my attachment can suffer decay? Bear me witness, heaven! I know no creature on the face of the earth that can enter into competition with you; there is  
not

not the thing in nature that I prize in comparison. I love you a thousand times better than myself, and would die with joy to purchase your ease and satisfaction. I can never repay the benefits you have conferred on me; I can never rise to an equality with you.

What anguish then do you inflict upon me, when you talk of becoming the victim of my unkindness? Believe you I can endure, after having dissipated your patrimony and drawn you with me into exile, after having experienced from you a tenderness such as man never in any other instance obtained from woman, to entertain the idea of embittering the remainder of your life, and shortening your existence? I should regard myself as the most execrable of monsters. I could not live under the recollection of so unheard of a guilt. If you would not  
have

have me abhor myself and curse existence, live, confide in me, and be happy!

Oh, Marguerite ! how wretched and pitiable is my situation ! Make some allowance for me ! I have a secret, that I would give worlds to utter, but dare not. Do not imagine that there is, or can be any decay in my affection ! Confide in me ! Allow to necessity, what never, never could be the result of choice ! In all things else, you shall know my inmost heart, as you possess the boundless and unalterable affection of my soul !

Marguerite was somewhat, but not wholly, soothed by the earnestness of my protestations. She saw, for the prescience of the heart is never deceived, that a blow was given to the entireness of our affection, from which it would never recover. She felt, for in truth and delicacy of sentiment she was much my superior, that the reserve,

serve, in which I persisted, and for which I deprecated excuse, might be sufficiently consistent with a vulgar attachment, but would totally change the nature of ours. She was aware that it related to no ordinary point, that it formed the pole-star of my conduct, that it must present itself afresh from day to day, and that in its operation it amounted to a divorce of the heart. She submitted however, and endeavoured to appear chearful. Though she felt the worm of sorrow gnawing her vitals, she was unwilling to occasion me an uneasiness it was in her power to withhold. She was struck with the consistency and determination of my resistance, and expostulated no more.

We went to Constance. We bade adieu to the scene of a six years' happiness, such as the earth has seldom witnessed. I alone had occasioned



some imperfection in that happiness. There were times indeed when, sitting in affectionate communion with my wife, and surrounded by my children, my sensations had been as exquisitely delicious as the state of human existence ever had to boast. I felt my heart expand; I was conscious to the unreserved union that subsisted among us; I felt myself identified with all that I loved, and all for whom my heart was anxious. But the curse entailed upon me from the earliest period to which my memory can reach, operated even in the cottage of the lake. I was not formed to enjoy a scene of pastoral simplicity. Ambition still haunted me; an uneasiness, scarcely defined in its object, from time to time recurred to my mind. If I thought I wanted nothing for myself, I deemed a career of honour due to my children. Again, when I regarded  
honour

honour as an empty phantom, and persuaded myself that all conditions of life were intrinsically equal, I recollected the fearful scene where hunger and destruction had hung over us in Constance, and in imagination often pictured to myself that scene as on the point of being renewed. The sword of the demon famine, seemed to my disturbed apprehension to be suspended over us by a hair. Such had been the draught of bitterness that occasionally detracted from this most enviable, as in retrospect I am willing to denominate it, period of my existence.

We quitted our rural retreat, and took up our abode in a prosperous mercantile city. I hired commodious apartments in one of the grand squares, not far from the spot where the fairs are usually held. Undoubtedly there was nothing in this residence very congenial to the bent of my disposi-

tion, or the projects that fermented in my mind. I had merely chosen it by way of interval, and to soften the transition from what I had been, to what I purposed to be. In the multitude of irresolute thoughts with which I laboured, the small distance of Constance from the cottage of the lake, made me feel as if the removal thither was one of the gentlest and most moderate measures to which I could have recourse.

I had never been less happy and at peace with myself than I was now. From general society and the ordinary intercourse of acquaintance I had long been estranged, and it was in vain that I now endeavoured to return to habits of that sort. The society which the city of Constance afforded, had few charms for me. It had no pretensions to the politeness, the elegance, the learning or the genius, an intercourse with which had once been familiar to me,

me. It scarcely contained within its walls any but such as were occupied in merchandise or manufacture. The attention of its inhabitants were divided between these objects, and the incroachments which were making upon the ancient religion by the Confession of Augsburgh and the dogmas of Calvin. The majority of the inhabitants were Protestants; and, a few years before, they had expelled their bishop and the canons of their cathedral. Having however miscarried in a religious war into which they had entered, these dignitaries had been reinstalled in their functions and emoluments. The situation thus produced was an unnatural one; and a storm was evidently brewing more violent than any which the city had yet sustained. The gloomy temper and melancholy austerity of the reformers were as little congenial to my temper, as the sordid



ignorance and selfishness of the trading spirit of the community.

I therefore lived in a state of seclusion. I endeavoured to seek amusement in such novelties and occupations as might present themselves to a person disengaged from the general vortex. But, if the distinguished sphere in which I had once moved, disqualified me for taking an interest in these puerilities, the anticipations in which I indulged of the future disqualified me still more. My domestic scene too no longer afforded me the consolation and relief I had been accustomed to derive from it. Marguerite exerted herself to appear chearful and contented ; but it was an exertion. I began to fear that the arrow of disappointment had indeed struck upon her heart. I was anxiously occupied in considering what I was to do next. I hoped that our next step might operate to revive her gaiety.

gaiety, and by additional splendour amuse her solicitude. I began to fear that I had taken a wrong method, and entered the career of a better fortune with too much caution and timidity. At all events I felt that we no longer lived together as we had done. There was no more opening of the heart between us, no more infantine guilelessness and sincerity, no more of that unapprehensive exposure of every thought of the soul, that adds the purest zest to the pleasures of domestic life. We stood in awe of each other; each was to the other in some degree an intrusive and unwelcome spy upon what was secretly passing in the heart. There may be persons who regard this as an evil very capable of being endured; but they must be such as never knew the domestic joys I once experienced. The fall from one of these conditions of life to the other, was too bitter.

## CHAP. VI.

**A**NXIOUS to divert my thoughts from what I hoped was only a temporary evil, I determined, accompanied by Charles, to make a tour of some of the cities of Germany. Dresden was the capital to which I was most desirous of conducting him. Maurice, duke of Saxony, who held his court there, and who was now only twenty-three years of age, was incomparably the most accomplished prince of the empire. Desirous as I was that my only son should fill a distinguished career, I thought I could not better prepare him for the theatre of his native country, than by thus initiating him

him beforehand in scenes of distinction and greatness.

He was exceedingly delighted with his tour. We had not proceeded many leagues from Constance, before, indulging the bent of my mind, I laid aside the humbleness of my appearance, and the obscure style in which we travelled; and having procured a numerous cavalcade of horses and servants, I set forward with considerable magnificence. We passed through Munich, Ratisbon and Prague. At Munich we found the court of the elector Palatine; the diet of the empire was sitting at Ratisbon, when we arrived at that city. Charles had been almost entirely a stranger to every thing princely and magnificent from the time that he was nine years of age; and he was now exactly at that period of human life, when external appearances are apt to make the strongest impression.



pression. To him every thing that occurred seemed like a transportation into a new world. The figure we made procured us as strangers, unquestioned admission into every circle. We mixed with princes, ourselves, in garb and figure, confounded with those we saw. I had lived too much and too long in the most splendid society, to find any difficulty in resuming the unembarrassed and courtly manners which I had for years laid aside ; and Charles might be said to see his father in a new character. Novelty prompted his admiration ; he was intoxicated with wonder. His disposition had always led him to bold and adventurous conceptions ; nothing less than an imperious sense of duty could have restrained him from quitting our humble cottage, and casting himself upon the world in search of honour and distinction. His generous heart had beat to burst away from the

the obscurity of his station; and it was with impatience and discontent that he looked forward to the life of a swain. Yet he knew not how to break through the obstacles that confined him. It was therefore with transports of delight that he saw them vanishing as of themselves, and the career of glory opening, as if by enchantment, to his eager steps.

The court of Dresden was infinitely more delightful to him than the court of Munich, or the imperial display at Ratisbon. Here Charles saw a young prince in the flower of his age, whose talents and spirit rendered him the universal object of attention and adoration. He remarked, in the fire of his eyes, the vivacity of his gestures, and the grandeur of his port, something inexpressibly different from those princes, of whom it is necessary that their rank should be announced to you

by some extrinsic circumstance, that you may not mistake them for a merchant's clerk or a city-magistrate. The sentiment that he breathed as it were instinctively, as we returned from the first time of our seeing duke Maurice, was, At twenty-three years of age may I, in appearance, accomplishments and spirit, resemble this man !

Here I was desirous of making a longer stay than at the cities through which we had previously passed, and of procuring for my son some personal intercourse with this great ornament of the age in which we lived. I judged this to be the more easy, as, in our first visit to the palace, I had perceived some French noblemen of the Protestant persuasion, who had resorted to the duke's court in search of employment. They appeared not to know me, but that was little to be wondered at, considering that I had been seven years  
absent

absent from my country, and that the calamities by which I had been overtaken more than once during that period, might be supposed to have produced a greater effect upon me than the mere lapse of years would have done. Among the rest I remarked Gaspar de Coligny, who was only twenty-one years of age at the time I quitted France, and had then been remarked as one of the most promising young men his country had to boast. His stay here was expected to be short; his hopes in his own country, from the greatness of his connections, were of the highest class; and he had only come to Dresden at the earnest invitation of duke Maurice, who entertained an ardent affection for him. My heart led me towards him; policy concurred in dictating the application, as, if I were fortunate enough to gain his favour, my son could not have a friend better qualified,



qualified, either to form his character, or forward his advancement.

I wrote to Coligny to announce my request to him, and, in a few hours after the delivery of my letter, that young nobleman came in person to wait on me. He informed me that he had done so, because he had something of delicacy to mention, which he did not choose to trust to the intermission of a third person, and upon which, as he hoped I could remove his scruple, he did not like even to bestow the formality of putting it on paper.

I am a gentleman of France, said Coligny; you will excuse my frankness. I am a gentleman of France; you will not wonder at the niceness of my honour. Mixing in society, I do not pretend minutely to investigate the character of every person with whom I converse; but what you ask of me, obliges me to consult my understanding,

ing, and enquire into facts. I cannot consent to vouch for any man's character to another, till I have paid some attention to the ground upon which that character rests.

I remember the count de St. Leon with pleasure and advantage at the court of my own sovereign. Every one admired his accomplishments, his gallantry and his learning; every one spoke of him with respect. Unfortunate circumstances, as we all understood, deprived you of your patrimony; that is nothing to me; I respect a nobleman in misfortune, as much as when he is surrounded with wealth and splendour. You retired into voluntary exile; I heard, with great grief, of some subsequent calamities that have overtaken you. But, here in Saxony, I see you resuming all your former splendour, and coming forward with the magnificence of a prince.

Other

Other of your countrymen have remarked it, as well as myself, and feel themselves at a loss to account for what they see.

Excuse me, count ! by your application to me, you oblige me to speak freely. I dare say, you can clear up the difficulty, and account for this second revolution in your fortune, upon which I shall then be the first to congratulate you. I cannot suspect a man, with your high descent and the illustrious character you formerly maintained, of any thing dishonourable. But you have not sufficiently considered the account we all owe to one another, and the clearness of proceeding we are obliged to maintain, not only to our own hearts, but in the face of the world. The present occasion is, I trust, fortunate for you ; and, when you have assisted me in complying with the rules by which every honourable

able man governs himself, I shall be eager to publish your justification, and render you all the service in my power.

I was ready to burst with astonishment and vexation during this representation of Coligny. I could feel my colour change from pale to red, and from red to pale. I could only answer with suffocation and inward rage, that I was much obliged to him; I would consider what he said; I would acquaint him with my justification; and, whenever it was made, he might be assured it should be an ample one.—

I was cautious as to what I uttered; I could not immediately foresee what it was eligible, or what it was possible, to do; and I was resolved that I would not, by an idle or hasty expression, preclude myself, in a matter of so much moment, from the benefits of future deliberation. If what I had just heard had come from any other person, I  
should



should probably have despised it; but I felt at once that Gaspar de Coligny might be considered, in a case of this sort, as the representative of all that was most honourable and illustrious in my native country.—Finding that I was indisposed to any further communication on the subject, he took a polite leave, and departed.

I was no sooner alone, than I felt myself overwhelmed with mortification and shame. I had rejoiced in the bequests of the stranger, because I regarded them as the means of restoring me to splendour, and replacing my children in the situation to which they were entitled by their birth. Was that which I had regarded as the instrument of their glory, to become the medium of their ignominy and disgrace? I had suffered all other misfortunes, but the whisper of dishonour had never been breathed against me.

I was

I was a son of honour, descended of a race of heroes, and cradled in the lap of glory and fame. When we quitted Paris in the year 1537, my incomparable wife had set to sale our entire property, resolved that, though driven into exile, we would not leave it in the power of the meanest individual to controvert the sacred attention we yielded to every just obligation. Since that time I had declined from the splendour of rank to the humble situation of a rustic, cultivating my little property with my own hands; nay, I had even, for a short time, hired myself as a labourer in the garden of the bishop of Constance. But the same disdain of every thing disgraceful had followed me to my cottage and my truckle bed, which I had originally learned in the halls of chivalry and the castle of my ancestors. Accordingly I had uniformly retained the  
same

same honourable character and spotless fame. St. Leon, the virtuous cottager, had in nothing blemished the name of St. Leon, furrounded with glory in the siege of Pavia. Often, and with pride, had I pointed out this circumstance to my son, adding, Wherever fortune calls you, for whatever scenes you may be reserved, remember that your father was unfortunate, but that through life he never acted a deed nor conceived a thought, that should stain your manly cheeks with the blush of shame! I stand before you a culprit, as having robbed you of your patrimony, but I have preserved for you entire the inheritance of our honour!

This had been the first lesson imprinted upon my infant mind. All other possessions I had ever held cheap and worthless in comparison with that of an illustrious name. My indignation at the attack it now sustained, was boundless.

boundless. The more I thought, the more intolerable it appeared. I was impatient and furious, like a lion struggling in the toils. I could with joy have trampled under my feet whoever aspersed me. I could have wanted in blood, and defied my adversaries to mortal combat. Alas, all my fury was useless here! It was no tale whispered in the dark that I had to contend with; it was the commentary of the world upon incontestible facts. Though a hecatomb of souls should be sacrificed at the shrine of my blasted name, the facts would still remain, the mystery still require to be solved. Coligny, the virtuous Coligny, had made no observations on the circumstances he mentioned; he merely proposed a difficulty, and waited my answer.

I was called upon to exercise the whole of my deliberative powers, as to  
the



the reply which was to be returned, or the conduct to be held, upon the question of Coligny. Every thing I most valued was now at issue; and a false step taken under the present circumstances could never be retrieved. I had another sort of party to deal with here, than when I had told Marguerite the tale of the stranger and his legacy. Nothing would pass now, but what bore an open, fair and unequivocal appearance. I must tell no tale that could not bear to be sifted to the bottom, and that did not fully accord with all the vouchers with which it could be collated. I had written to Marguerite, immediately after launching into the expence with which our tour had been attended, that I had received an unexpected acquisition from the death of a relation of my own family in France. I knew that the story of the three thousand crowns would

no

no longer account for the style in which I was proceeding, and this fabrication suggested itself upon the spur of the moment. I hated to think of the difficulties in the way of explanation in which I was involved; I abhorred the system of falsehood I was driven to practise. It did not occur to me at the time, infatuated as I was! that I should have occasion to account for this accession of wealth to any one out of my own family. Marguerite, I well knew, had no correspondence in France, nor therefore any obvious means of verifying or refuting this second deception. But such a story could not be told to noblemen of France, without being instantly liable to be compared with known facts, and eventually investigated upon the spot where the scene was laid. Marguerite herself, I well knew, had listened with incredulity to the explanation I had

3 made

made and the alleged legacy of the stranger; what could I expect from strangers? They might not all possess her good sense and sagacity in judging; but they were destitute of that personal kindness and partiality, which were calculated to induce her to credit whatever I affirmed. Most men have a malignant pleasure in the detection of specious pretences, in humbling the importunate superiority that obscures their claims, and removing the rival who might otherwise acquire the prize of which they are in pursuit.

My mind was still torn and distracted with these contemplations, when, in the evening of the same day on which I had received the visit of Coligny, my attention was suddenly roused by the abrupt entrance of my son into the chamber where I was sitting. He opened the door with a hurried action as he entered, and, having closed

closed it impetuously after him, advanced directly towards me. He then stopped himself; and, turning from me, I could perceive a rush of crimson in his face like that of a man suffocated. A passion of tears succeeded, that shook his frame, and sufficiently proved that his feelings had sustained some extraordinary shock. My whole soul was alarmed at what I saw; and, following him as he retired to the other side of the room, in the gentlest accents I endeavoured to soothe him, while I enquired with earnestness and trepidation into the cause of his grief.



## CHAP. VII.

**H**E repelled me. Sit down, fir, sit down! Do not follow me, I beg of you; but sit down!

His manner was earnest and emphatical. Mechanically and without knowing what I did, I obeyed his directions. He came towards me.

I have no time, added he, for qualifying and form. Tell me! am I the son of a man of honour, or a villain?

He saw I was shocked at the unexpected rudeness of his question.

Forgive me, my father! I have always been affectionate and dutiful; I have ever looked up to you as my model and my oracle. But I have  
been

been insulted! It never was one of your lessons to teach me to bear an insult!

Is it, replied I, with the sternness that the character of a father will seldom fail to inspire under such circumstances, because you have been insulted, that you think yourself authorised to come home and insult him to whom you owe nothing but respect and reverence?

Stop, sir! Before you claim my reverence, you must show your title to it, and wipe off the aspersions under which you at present labour.

Insolent, presumptuous boy! Know that I am not by you to be instructed in my duty, and will not answer so rude a questioner! The down as yet scarcely shades your school-boy's cheek; and have you so forgot the decencies of life as to scoff your father?—His eye brightened as I spoke.

You are right, sir ! It gives me pleasure to see your blood rise in return to my passion. Your accent is the accent of innocence. But, indeed ! the more innocent and noble you shall prove yourself, the more readily will you forgive my indignation.

I cannot tell. My temper does not fit me to bear the rudeness of a son. Nor do I think that such behaviour as this can be any credit to you, whatever may have been the provocation. Tell me however what is the insult that has thus deeply shaken you !

I went this afternoon to the tennis-court near the river, and played several games with the young count Luitmann. While we were playing, came in the chevalier Dupont, my countryman. The insolence of his nature is a subject of general remark ; and he has, though I know not for what reason, conceived a particular animosity to me. A trifling dispute

dispute arose between us. We gradually warmed. He threatened to turn me out of the court; I repented the insult; and he passionately answered that the son of an adventurer and a sharper had no business there, and he would take care should never be admitted again. I attempted to strike him, but was prevented; and presently learned that the sudden and unexplained way in which we have emerged from poverty, was the ground of his aspersions. As I gained time, and reflected more distinctly upon what was alleged, I felt that personal violence could never remove an accusation of this sort. I saw too, though, intoxicated, as I had idly been, with the unwonted splendour to which I was introduced, I had not adverted to it at the time, that the case was of a nature that required explanation; and I retired in silence, determined, if possible, effectually

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fectually to obliterate the ignominy to which I was exposed.

To you, sir, I resort for explanation. Send me back to the insolent youth and his companions, with a plain and unanswerable tale, that may put to silence for ever these brutal scoffs and reproaches. Let it be seen this night which of the two has most fully merited to be thrust out of honourable society. I trust, I have not so demeaned myself, but that our mutual companions will join to compel this unmannered boor to retract his aspersions.

Charles, you are too warm and impetuous !—

Too warm, sir ! when I hear my father loaded with the foulest appellations ?

You are young, and ill-qualified to terminate in the proper way a business of this serious aspect : leave it to me !

Excuse me, my father ! Though the names I have repeated were bestowed

flowed upon you, it was against me that the insult was employed. I must return immediately, and obtain justice. This is a moment that must in some degree fix my character for fortitude and determination, and I cannot withdraw from the duty it imposes. Only tell me what I have to say. Furnish me with a direct and unambiguous explanation of what Dupont has objected to us, and I undertake for the rest.

I see, my son, that you are moved, and I will trust you!

He seized my hand, he gazed earnestly in my face, he seemed prepared to devour every word I should utter.

Gaspar de Coligny, the flower of the French nobility, has been with me this morning. He has stated to me in an ingenuous and friendly way the same difficulty, with which Dupont has so brutally taunted you. I was meditating

ing and arranging my answer but now, when you entered the room.

As I uttered these words, Charles let go my hand, and withdrew his eyes, with evident tokens of disappointment and chagrin. He paused for a few moments, and then resumed :

Why do you tell me of meditation and arrangement ? Why did you send away Coligny unanswered, or why baffle and evade the earnestness of my enquiries ? I know not all the sources of wealth ; but I cannot doubt that the medium through which wealth has honourably flowed, may, without effort and premeditation, easily be explained. A just and a brave man acts fearlessly and with explicitness ; he does not shun, but court, the scrutiny of mankind ; he lives in the face of day, and the whole world confesses the clearness of his spirit and the rectitude of his conduct.

Sir,

Sir, I have just set my foot on the threshold of life. There is one lesson you have taught me which I swear never to forget ; to hold life and all its advantages cheap, in comparison with an honourable fame. My soul burns with the love of distinction. I am impatient to burst away from the goal, and commence the illustrious career. I feel that I have a hand and a heart capable of executing the purposes that my soul conceives. Uninured to dishonour, or to any thing that should control the passion of my bosom, think, sir, what are my emotions at what has just occurred !

I was bred in obscurity and a humble station. I owed this disadvantage, you tell me, to your error. I forgave you ; I was content ; I felt that it was incumbent on me by my sword and my own exertions to hew my way to distinction. You have since exchanged



the lowness of our situation for riches and splendour. At this revolution I felt no displeasure; I was well satisfied to start upon more advantageous terms in the race I determined to run. But, sir, whence came these riches? Riches and poverty are comparatively indifferent to me; but I was not born to be a mark for shame to point her finger at. A little while ago you were poor; you were the author of your own poverty; you dissipated your paternal estate. Did I reproach you? No; you were poor, but not dishonoured! I attended your couch in sickness; I exerted my manual labour to support you in affliction. I honoured you for your affection to my mother; I listened with transport to the history of your youth; I was convinced I should never blush to call Reginald de St. Leon my father. I believed that lessons of honour, so impressive as those you instilled into  
my

my infant mind, could never flow but from an honourable spirit. Oh, if there is any thing equivocal or ignoble in the riches we have displayed, restore me, instantly restore me to unblemished and virtuous poverty !

I was astonished at the firmness and manliness of spirit that Charles upon this occasion discovered. I could scarcely believe that these were the thoughts and words of a youth under seventeen years of age. I felt that every thing illustrious and excellent might be augured of one who, at these immature years, manifested so lofty and generous a soul. I could have pressed him in my arms, have indulged my emotions in sobs and tears of transport, and congratulated myself that I was father to so worthy a son. But his temper and manners awed, and held me at a distance. This was one

consequence of the legacies of the stranger!

Charles! said I, your virtues extort my confidence. For the world a tale must be prepared that shall serve to elude its curiosity and its malice. But to you I confess, there is a mystery annexed to the acquisition of this wealth that can never be explained.

He stood aghast at my words. Am I to believe my ears? A tale prepared? A mystery never to be explained? I adjure you by all that you love, and all that you hold sacred——!

His voice was drowned in a sudden gush of tears. With an action of earnestness and deprecation, he took hold of my hand.

No, sir, no artful tale, no disguise, no hypocrisy!——As he spoke, his voice suddenly changed, his accent became clear and determined.—Will you consent this very hour to quit the  
court

court of Dresden, and to resign fully and without reserve this accursed wealth, for the acquisition of which you refuse to account ?

Whence, replied I, have you the insolence to make such a proposal ?—— No, I will not !

Then I swear by the omnipresent and eternal God, you shall never see or hear of me more !

I perceived that this was no time for the assertion of paternal authority. I saw that the poor boy was strangely and deeply moved, and I endeavoured to soothe him. I felt that the whole course of his education had inspired him with an uncontrollable and independent spirit, and that it was too late to endeavour to repress it.

My dear Charles, said I, what is come to you ? To hear the strange language you employ, I should scarcely know you. This impertinent Du-  
pont



pont has put you quite beside yourself. Another time we will talk over the matter calmly, and depend upon it, every thing shall be made out to your satisfaction.

Do not imagine, sir, that my self-possession is not perfect and complete. I know what I do, and my resolution is unalterable. If you have any explanation to give, give it now. If you will yield to my proposal, declare your assent, and I am again your son. But to bear the insults of my fellows unanswered, or to live beneath the consciousness of an artful and fictitious tale, no consideration on earth shall induce me. I love you, sir; I cannot forget your lessons or your virtues. I love my mother and my sisters; no words can tell how dearly and how much. But my resolution is taken; I separate myself from you all and for ever. Nothing in my mind  
can

can come in competition with a life of unblemished honour.

And are you such a novice, as to need the being told that honour is a prize altogether out of the reach of an unknown and desolate wanderer, such as you propose to become? My wealth, boy, is unlimited, and can buy silence from the malicious, and shouts and applause from all the world. A golden key unlocks the career of glory, which the mean and the penniless are never allowed to enter.

I am not such a novice, as not to have heard the language of vice, though I never expected to hear it from a father. Poverty with integrity shall content me. The restless eagerness of my spirit is so great, that I will trust to its suggestions, and hope to surmount the obstacles of external appearance. If I am disappointed in this, and destined to perish unheard  
of

of and unremembered, at least I will escape reproach. I will neither be charged with the deeds, nor give utterance to the maxims, of dishonour.

Charles, replied I, be not the calumniator of your father ! I swear to you by every thing that is sacred ; and you know my integrity ; never did the breath of falshood pollute these lips ;——

He passionately interrupted me. Did the stranger bequeath you three thousand ducats ? Have you lately received an unexpected acquisition by the death of a near relation in France ?

I was silent. This was not a moment for trifling and equivocation.

Oh, my father, how is your character changed and subverted ? You say true. For sixteen years I never heard a breath of falshood from your lips ; I trusted you, as I would the oracles of eternal truth. But it is past ! A

few

few short months have polluted and defaced a whole life of integrity! In how many obscurities and fabulous inconsistencies have you entangled yourself? Nor is it the least of the calamities under which my heart sickens at this moment, that I am reduced to hold language like this to a father!

What misery was mine, to hear myself thus arraigned by my own son, and to be unable to utter one word in reply to his accusations! To be thus triumphed over by a stripling; and to feel the most cruel degradation, in the manifestation of an excellence that ought to have swelled my heart with gratulation and transport! I had recollected my habitual feelings for near forty years of existence; I had dropped from my memory my recent disgrace, and dared to appeal to my acknowledged veracity; when this retort from my son came to plunge me  
tenfold



tenfold deeper in a sea of shame. He proceeded :

I am no longer your son ! I am compelled to disclaim all affinity with you ! But this is not all. By your dishonour, you have cut me off from the whole line of my ancestors. I cannot claim affinity with them, without acknowledging my relation to you. You have extinguished abruptly an illustrious house. The sun of St. Leon is set for ever ! Standing as I do a candidate for honourable fame, I must henceforth stand by myself, as if a man could be author of his own existence, and must expect no aid, no favour, no prepossession, from any earthly consideration, save what I am and what I shall perform.

My son, replied I, you cut me to the heart. Such is the virtue you display, that I must confess myself never to have been worthy of you, and I begin

gin to fear I am now less worthy of you than ever. Yet you must suffer me to finish what I was about to say when you so passionately interrupted me. I swear then by every thing that is sacred, that I am innocent. Whatever interpretation the world may put upon my sudden wealth, there is no shadow of dishonesty or guilt connected with its acquisition. The circumstances of the story are such that they must never be disclosed; I am bound to secrecy by the most inviolable obligations, and this has led me to utter a forged and inconsistent tale. But my conscience has nothing with which to reproach me. If then, Charles, my son, once my friend, my best and dearest consolation!—I pressed his hand, and my voice faltered, as I spoke—if you are resolute to separate yourself from me, at least take this recollection with you wherever you

you go,—Whatever may be my external estimation, I am not the slave of vice, your father is not a villain !

Alas, my father ! rejoined Charles mournfully, what am I to believe ? What secret can be involved in so strange a reverse of fortune, that is not dishonourable ? You have given utterance to different fictions on the subject, fictions that you now confess to be such ; how am I to be convinced that what you say at this moment is not dictated more by a regard for my tranquillity, than by the simplicity of conscious truth ? If I believe you, I am afraid my credit will be the offspring rather of inclination, than of probability. And indeed, if I believe you, what avails it ? The world will not believe. Your character is blasted ; your honour is destroyed ; and, unless I separate myself from you and disown

disown your name, I shall be involved in the same disgrace.

Saying thus, he left me, and in about half an hour returned. His return I had not foreseen; I had made no use of his absence. My mind was overcome, my understanding was stupefied, by a situation and events I had so little expected. I had stood, unmoved, leaning against the wall, from the instant of his departure. I seemed rooted to the spot, incapable of calling up my fortitude, or arranging my ideas. My eyes had rolled, my brow was knit, I had bit my lips and my tongue with agony. From time to time, I had muttered a few words,—My son! my son!—wealth! wealth!—my wife!—my son!—but they were incoherent and without meaning.

Charles re-entered the apartment where the preceding conversation had passed, and the noise he made in entering



ing roused me. He had his hat in his hand, which he threw from him, and exclaimed with an accent of dejection and anguish, My father!—farewel!

Cruel, cruel boy! can you persist in your harsh and calamitous resolution? If you have no affection for me, yet think of your mother and your sisters!

Seek not, sir, to turn me from my purpose! The struggle against it in my own bosom has been sufficiently severe, but it must be executed.—His voice as he spoke was inward, stifled and broken with the weight of his feelings.

Then—farewel! I replied. Yet take with you some provision for your long and perilous adventure. Name the sum you will accept, and, whatever is its amount, it shall instantly be yours.

I will have nothing. It is this wealth, with whose splendour I was at first

first child enough to be dazzled, that has destroyed us. My fingers shall not be contaminated with an atom of it. What is to be my fate, as yet I know not. But I am young, and strong, and enterprising, and courageous. The lessons of honour and nobility live in my bosom. Though my instructor is lost, his instructions shall not be vain!

Once more farewell! From my heart I thank you for your protestations of innocence. Never will I part with this last consolation, to believe them. I have recollected the manner in which they were uttered; it was the manner of truth. If there be any evidence of a contrary tendency, that I will forget. Though to the world I shall be without father and without relatives, I will still retain this sacred consolation for my hours of retirement and solitude, that my ancestors were  
honourable,

honourable, and my father, in spite of all presumptions to the contrary,—was innocent !

I How hard it is to quit for ever a family of love and affection as ours has been ! Bear witness for me, how deeply I sympathised with you at Paris, in Switzerland, in Constance ! Though now you dissolve the tie between us, yet till now, never had a son greater reason for gratitude to a father. You and my mother have made me what I am ; and that I may preserve what you have made me, I now cast myself upon an untried world. The recollection of what I found you in the past period of my life, shall be for ever cherished in my memory !

I quit my mother and my sisters without leave-taking or adieu. It would be a fruitless and painful addition to what each party must learn to bear. Dear, excellent, peerless protector

teetor and companions of my early years ! my wishes are yours, my prayers shall be for ever poured out for you ! You, fir, who rob them of a fon and a brother, be careful to make up to them a loss, which I doubt not they will account grievous ! I can do nothing for them. I can throw myself into the arms of poverty ; it is my duty. But, in doing so, I must separate myself from them, assuredly innocent, and worthy of more and greater benefits than I could ever confer on them !—— Farewel !

Saying this, he threw himself into my arms, and I felt the agonies of a parting embrace.



## CHAP. VIII.

FOR some time I could not believe him departed. When I retired to rest, I felt the want of Charles to press my hand, and wish me refreshing slumbers; and I passed on, sad and solitary, to my chamber. When I came next morning into the breakfasting room, Charles was not there, to greet me with looks of affection and duty; and the gilding and ornaments of the apartment were to me no less disconsolate than the damps and footiness of a dungeon.

I hoped he would return. I knew how tenderly he was attached to his mother and his sisters; I was fully convinced that the affection for me which had been the perpetual habit of his

his mind, could not be entirely eradicated from his heart. I mentioned him not in my letters to Constance; the pen lingered, my hand trembled, when I thought of him; I could neither pretend that he was with me, nor announce the catastrophe of his absence. But I opened the letters of Marguerite with still increasing impatience. Finding that he did not return to me, I hoped that some alteration of the extraordinary resolution he had formed would lead him to Constance. In vain I hoped! There reached me, by no conveyance, from no quarter, tidings of my son!

How surprising an event! A youth, not seventeen years of age, forming and executing in the same instant the purpose of flying from his parents and his family! Deserting all his hopes, all his attachments, all his fortune! Refusing the smallest particle of assist-

ance or provision in his entrance upon the wide scene of the world! Oh, Charles! exclaimed I, you are indeed an extraordinary and admirable youth! But are you fortified against all the temptations of the world and all its hardships? Do your tender years qualify you to struggle with its unkindness, its indifference and its insults? In how few quarters is merit ever treated with the attention and benevolence it deserves! How often is it reduced to tremble with indignation at the scoffs and brutality to which it is exposed, and at the sight of folly and vice exalted in its stead, and appointed its despot and its master! My son, my son! what will be your fate? Is your unseasoned frame reserved to perish by hunger, in barren deserts and beneath inclement skies? Will you not in some hour of bitter disappointment and unpitied loneliness, lay yourself

self down in despair and die? Will you not be made the slave of some capricious tyrant for bread? Generous as is your nature, will it be eternally proof against reiterated temptation? Upon what a world are you turned adrift! a world of which you know as little, as the poor affrighted soul of a dying man knows, when launching into the mysterious, impenetrable abyss of eternity! Unnatural father, to have reduced my only son to this cruel alternative! I should with a less aching and agonising heart have accompanied his senseless remains to the grave. Dreadful as that parting is, there at least the anxious mind of the survivor has rest. There are no thoughts and devices in the silence of the tomb. There all our prospects end, and we are no longer sensible to pain, to persecution, to insult and to agony. But Charles, thus departed,



wandering on the face of the globe, without protector, adviser or resource, no lapse of years can put a close upon my anxiety for him ! If I am in ease and prosperity, I cannot relish them, for my exposed and living son may be at that moment in the depth of misery ! If I am myself oppressed and suffering, the thought of what may be his fate, will form a dreadful addition to all my other calamities ! What am I to say of him upon my return to Constance ? If he had died, this was a natural casualty ; and, whatever grief it might occasion, time no doubt would mollify and abate it. But what account can now be rendered of him to his disconsolate mother and terrified sisters ? How can I lift up my head in their presence, or meet the glance of their reproachful eyes !

The idea had occurred to me, in the instant of Charles's departure, and immediately

mediately after his exit, of detaining or bringing him back by force. He was by his extreme youth, according to the maxims of the world, still in a state of guardianship, and unqualified to be the chooser of his own actions. But to this mode of proceeding, however deeply I felt the catastrophe which had taken place, I could never consent. It was in utter hostility to the lessons of chivalry and honour, with which I had been familiarised from my earliest infancy. There might be many cases, in which this restraint laid by a father upon his child would be salutary. But the idea which had occasioned the secession of Charles, was decisive in this instance. What right had I to chain him to dishonour? The whole bent of his education had been to impress him with the feelings by which he was now actuated. If I detained him for a short time, was there any vigilance on

earth that could finally prevent him from executing a purpose upon which his whole soul was resolved? Or, suppose there were, must not the consequence be to break his spirit, to deprive him of all manliness and energy, and to render him the mere drooping and soulless shadow of that conspicuous hero I had been anxious to make him? It might be said indeed, that this was the determination of a boy, formed in an hour, and that, if I detained him only long enough for deliberation and revival, he would then of his own accord retract so desperate a project. But I felt that it was a resolution formed to endure, and was built upon principles that could not change so long as an atom of his mind remained. No; I was rather disposed to say, however grievous was the wound he inflicted on me, Go, my son! Act upon the dictates of your choice, as I have acted

acted on mine ! I admire your resolution, though I cannot imitate it. Your purpose is lofty and godlike ; and he that harbours it, was not born to be a slave. Be free ; and may every power propitious to generosity and virtue, smooth your path through life, and smile upon your desires !

The anguish I felt for having lost my son, and in this painful and reproachful manner, was not diminished to me either by society or amusement. I dared not go out of my house. I saw no one but my own attendants. I had not the courage to meet the countenance of a human creature. I knew not how far persons in Dresden might have heard the injurious reports which had occasioned the flight of my son, or even have been acquainted with the nature of that flight. I had promised to see Coligny again, but, alas ! the affair which had at first led me to wish



to see him, was now at an end. I had no heart to seek him ; nor indeed did I know what story I was to tell him, or how I was to remove the suspicions he had urged against me. The machine of human life, though constituted of a thousand parts, is in all its parts regularly and systematically connected ; nor is it easy to insert an additional member, the spuriousness of which an accurate observation will not readily detect. How was I to assign a source of my wealth different from the true, which would not be liable to investigation, and, when investigated, would not be seen to be counterfeit ? This indeed is the prime source of individual security in human affairs, that whatever any man does, may be subjected to examination, and whatever does not admit of being satisfactorily accounted for, exposes him whom it concerns to the most injurious suspicions.

cions. This law of our nature, so salutary in its general operation, was the first source of all my misfortunes.

I began now seriously to consider what judgment I was to pass upon the bequests of the stranger. Were they to be regarded as a benefit or a misfortune? Ought they to be set on a par with the poisoned robe of Nessus, which, being sent as a token of affection, was found in the experiment, to eat into the flesh, and burn up the vitals, of him that wore it? Should I from this instant reject their use, and returning to the modes of life established among my fellow men, content myself with the affection of those with whom I had intercourse, though poverty and hardships should be mingled with the balm?

The experiment I had made of these extraordinary gifts was a short one; but how contrary were all the results

I had arrived at, from those I looked for? When the stranger had arrived six months before at the cottage of the lake, he had found me a poor man indeed, but rich in the confidence, and happy in the security and content, of every member of my family. I lived in the bosom of nature, surrounded with the luxuriance of its gifts, and the sublimity of its features, which the romantic elevation of my soul particularly fitted me to relish. In my domestic scene I beheld the golden age renewed, the simplicity of the pastoral life without its grossness, a situation remote from cities and courts, from traffic and hypocrisy, yet not unadorned with taste, imagination and knowledge. Never was a family more united in sentiments and affection. Now all this beautiful scene was defaced! All was silence, suspicion and reserve. The one party dared not be ingenuous,  
and

and the other felt that all the paradise of attachment was dwindled to an empty name. No questions were asked; for no honest answer was given or expected. Though corporeally we might sit in the same apartment, in mind a gulph, wide, impassable and tremendous, gaped between us. My wife pined in speechless grief, and, it was to be feared, had sustained a mortal blow. My son, my only son, a youth of such promise that I would not have exchanged him for empires, had disappeared, and, as he had solemnly averred, for ever. My heart was childless; my bosom was bereaved of its dearest hope. It was for him principally that I had accepted, that I had rejoiced in, the gifts of the stranger. My darling vision was to see him clothed in the harness, surrounded with the insignia, of a hero. There was nothing I had so earnestly desired, as  
that



that his merits, graced with the favours of fortune, might cause him to stand confessed the first subject of France, a situation more enviable than that of its monarch, since he who holds it, is raised by deeds and the other only by birth, and if less respected by interested courtiers, is certain to be more honoured by the impartial voice of history. But, if I felt thus desolate and heart-broken for the loss of my son, what would be the sentiments of his mother, more susceptible to feel, and, in her present weakness of spirits, less vigorous to bear than myself, when the dreadful tidings should be communicated to her?

Yet I could not resolve to renounce donations which I had so dearly appropriated. I held it to be base and cowardly to surrender gifts so invaluable, upon so insufficient an experiment. He, I thought, must be a man of ignoble

noble and groveling spirit, who could easily be prevailed on to part with unbounded wealth and immortal life. I had but just entered upon the vast field that was open to me. It was of the nature of all great undertakings, to be attended with difficulties and obstacles in the commencement, to present a face calculated to discourage the man that is infirm of purpose. But it became my descent, my character and pretensions, to show myself serene in the midst of storms. Perseverance and constancy are the virtues of a man. Affairs of this extensive compass often prove in the issue the reverse of what they seemed in the outset. The tempest might be expected to disperse, difficulties to unravel themselves, and unlooked for concurrences to arise. All opposition and hostile appearance give way before him who goes calmly onward, and scorns to be dismayed.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IX.

**I**T was thus that I spurred myself on to persist in the path upon which I had entered. Having remained some time at Dresden, encouraging myself with the hope that Charles might yet join me before I quitted that city, I began to think of once more turning my steps towards the residence of the rest of my family. This was no chearful thought, but upon what was I to determine? I had a wife whom I ardently loved, and three daughters the darlings of my heart. Because I had lost a beloved son, was I to estrange myself from the rest of my kindred? I already felt most painfully the detachment and widowhood to which I was reduced,

reduced, and I clung with imperious affection to what remained of my family. The meeting I purposed must be a melancholy one ; but, in the sorrows of the heart there is a purer and nobler gratification, than in the most tumultuous pleasures we can partake while affection is silent. I looked forward indeed to scenes of endless variety and attraction, but in the mean time what seemed first to demand my attention was the beloved circle I had left behind in the city of Constance.

I retraced upon the present occasion the route I had lately pursued with my son. How different were now my sensations ? My heart was then indeed painfully impressed with the variance and dissolution of confidence that had arisen between me and his mother. It was perhaps principally for the sake of banishing this impression that I had had recourse to the splendour of equipage

page



page and attendance which was first assumed upon the journey from Constance to Dresden. Nor, frivolous as this expedient may now appear in the unattractive dispassionateness of narrative, had it been by any means weak of effect at the time it was employed. When Charles was once mounted on his proud and impatient steed, and decorated in rich and costly attire, I felt as it were the sluggishness of my imagination roused; I surveyed his shape and his countenance with inexpressible complacency; and already anticipated the period when he was to become the favourite of his sovereign and his country's pride. Now I returned with the same retinue, but the place that had been occupied by my son was empty. I sought him with frantic and restless gaze, I figured him to my disturbed and furious imagination, till the sensations and phantoms of my brain became

came intolerable ; I raved and imprecated curses on myself. I endeavoured to divert my thoughts by observing the scenes that passed before me. They talked to me of Charles ; they had been pointed out by each to each, and had been the subject of our mutual comment. Though Charles was endowed with a high relish for the beauties of nature, and, in our little retreat on the borders of the lake, had lived in the midst of them, he had seen little of the variety of her features ; and the journey we had made through the heart of Germany had furnished him with continual food for admiration and delight. Nor did the scenes I beheld, merely remind me of the sensations they produced in Charles ; they led me through a wider field. I recollected long conversations and digressive excursions which had been started by the impression they made. I recollected  
many

many passages and occurrences to which they had not the slightest reference, but which, having arisen while they constituted the visible scene, were forcibly revived by its reappearance. Thus, from various causes, my lost and lamented son was not a moment out of my thoughts during the whole journey. While I continued at Dresden, I seemed daily to expect his return; but, no sooner did I quit that city, than despair took possession of my heart.

Thus anxious and distressed, I arrived at Prague, and soon after at Ratisbon. I travelled slowly, because, though I was desirous of returning to Constance, I anticipated my arrival there with little complacence. As I drew nearer to my family, I felt more distinctly the impossibility of presenting myself before them, without first endeavouring to take off the shock they

they would sustain at seeing me return without my son. I therefore resolved to send forward a servant from Ratibon, whom I directed to make all practicable speed, as I designed to wait for the answer he should bring me at the city of Munich. To attempt to write to Marguerite on this subject, was a severe trial to me. The whole however that I proposed to myself was to remove the surprise that would be occasioned by seeing me alone, and to anticipate questions which it would be impossible for me to hear without anguish of mind and perturbation of countenance. I therefore took care to express myself in such terms as should lead Marguerite to believe that I had voluntarily left her son in Saxony, and that in no very long time he would rejoin his family. I trusted to subsequent events to unfold the painful catastrophe, and could not prevail on myself



myself to shock her maternal feelings so much as I must necessarily do, if I informed her of the whole at once. Charles had not been mentioned but in an ambiguous manner, in the letters I had recently received from Constance, and I was therefore convinced that he had neither gone to that place, nor conveyed thither any account of his proceedings.

The answer I received from Marguerite by my messenger was as follows:

“ Your absence has been long and critical, and the welfare of your daughters seems to require that we should rejoin each other as speedily as may be. Whether we shall meet here or at any other place you must determine. It is however right I should inform you that, during your absence, rumour has been busy with your reputation.

What

What the extent or importance of the ill reports circulated of you may be, I am scarcely competent to judge. We have lived in uniform privacy, and it is natural to suppose that the portion of censure that has reached us, is but a small part of what really exists. The mode in which you have proceeded, and the extraordinary figure you have made in a progress through Germany, have given weight to these insinuations—But it is not my intention to comment on what you have done.

“ You appear to design by your letter that I should understand you have left my son behind you in Saxony. Poor Charles ! I had an epistle from him three weeks ago, in which he informs me of what has happened, and apologises in the most pathetic terms for any seeming want of regard to me in his conduct, at the very moment that his heart bleeds for my fate. I did  
not

not think it necessary to communicate this circumstance to you. I have done with complaining. Now that I have fallen into the worst and most unlooked for misfortunes, I have a gratification that I do not choose to part with, in shutting up my sorrows in my own breast.

“ Oh, Charles, my son, my idol ! What is become of you ? For what calamities are you reserved ? He tells me it is necessary that I should never see or hear of him again. Never—I—his mother !—Reginald, there are some wounds that we may endeavour to forgive ; but they leave a sentiment in the heart, the demonstrations of which may perhaps be restrained, but which it is not in nature wholly to subdue. If I did but know where to find or to write to my poor boy, I would take my girls with me and partake his honest and honourable poverty, and never again

again join the shadow of him who was my husband. Forgive me, Reginald ! I did not intend to say this ! If I should prove unable to control the impatience of my grief, do not inflict the punishment of my offence on your innocent daughters !

“ As to your fiction of voluntarily leaving him behind for further improvement, it is of a piece with every thing you have lately attempted to make me believe. I no longer expect truth from you. For seventeen years I had a husband. Well, well ! I ought not perhaps to repine. I have had my share of the happiness which the present life is calculated to afford.

“ Reginald ! I have not long to live. When I tell you this, I am not giving way to melancholy presentiment. I will exert myself for the benefit of my girls. They will have a grievous loss in me, and for their sake



I will live as long as I can. But I feel that you have struck me on the heart. My nights are sleepless; my flesh is wasted; my appetite is entirely gone. You will presently be able to judge whether I am deceiving myself. The prospect for these poor creatures, who are at present all my care, is a dismal one. I know not for what they are reserved, but I can hope for nothing good. When I am dead, remember, and be a father to them. I ask nothing for myself; I have no longer any personal concern with life; but, if my dying request can have any weight with you, make up to them the duty you have broken to me. By all our past loves, by the cordiality and confidence in which we have so long lived, by the singleness and sincerity of our affection, by the pure delights, so seldom experienced in married life, that have

have attended our union, I conjure you listen to me and obey me in this !”

If I were deeply distressed for the loss of my son, if I looked forward with a mingled sensation of eagerness and alarm to the approaching interview with the rest of my family, it may easily be imagined that this letter formed a heavy addition to my mental anguish. I confess I thought it a cruel one. Marguerite might well suppose that the departure of Charles was a circumstance I must strongly feel, and she should not have thus severely aggravated the recent wounds of paternal grief. Some allowance however was to be made for a mother. When we are ourselves racked with intolerable pain, that certainly is not the time at which we can rationally be expected to exert the nicest and most vigilant consideration for another. Add to which, she was innocent of the

calamities she suffered, and could not but know that I was their sole author. But, whatever may be decided as to the propriety of the letter, its effect upon my mind was eminently salutary: I instantly determined on the conduct it became me to pursue.

I lost not a moment. From Dresden to Munich I had advanced with slow and unwilling steps; from Munich to Constance I proceeded as rapidly, as my conveyance and the nature of the roads would permit. I left my retinue at the gates of the town, and flew instantly to the apartments of my family. I hastened up stairs, and, as I entered the sitting room, I saw the first and most exemplary of matrons surrounded by her blooming daughters. I instantly perceived a great alteration in her appearance. Her look was dejected; her form emaciated; her countenance sickly and pale. She lifted up her  
eyes

eyes as I entered, but immediately dropped them again, without any discernible expression either of congratulation or resentment. I embraced my children with undescribable emotion; I said within myself, The love and affection I had reserved for Charles, shall be divided among you, and added to the share you each already possess of my heart! Having saluted them in turn, I addressed myself to Marguerite, telling her that I must have some conversation with her instantly. My manner was earnest: she led the way into another apartment.

I felt my heart overflowing at my tongue.

I am come to you, cried I, a repenting prodigal. Take me and mould me at your pleasure!

She looked up. She was struck with the honest fervour of my expression. She answered in almost forgotten terms,



and with a peculiar fulness of meaning, My husband!—It seemed as if the best years and the best emotions of our life were suddenly renewed.

Most adorable of women! I continued: do you think I can bear that you should die, and I your murderer? No man in any age or climate of the world ever owed so much to a human creature as I owe to you; no woman was ever so ardently loved; no woman ever so much deserved to be loved! If you were to die, I should never know peace again. If you were to die the victim of any miscalculation of mine, I should be the blackest of criminals!

Reginald! replied she, I am afraid I have been wrong. I am afraid I have written harshly to you. You have a feeling heart, and I have been too severe. Forgive me! it was the effect of love. Affection cannot view with  
a tran-

a tranquil eye the faults of the object beloved.

Let it be forgotten ! Let the last six months be blotted from our memory, be as though they had never existed !

She looked at me. Her look seemed to say, though she would not give the sentiment words, That can never be ; the loss of Charles, and certain other calamities of that period, are irretrievable !

I resign myself into your hands ! I have been guilty ; I have had secrets ; meditations engendered and shut up in my own bosom ; but it shall be so no more ! The tide of affection kept back from its natural channel, now flows with doubled impetuosity. Never did I love you, not when you first came a virgin to my arms, not on the banks of the Garonne, not in the cottage of the lake, so fervently, so entirely,

tirely, as I love you now ! Be my director ; do with me as you please ! I have never been either wise or virtuous, but when I have been implicitly guided by you !

I have wealth ; I am forbidden by the most solemn obligations to discover the source of that wealth. This only I may not communicate ; in all things else govern me despotically ! Shall I resign it all ? Shall I return to the cottage of the lake ? Shall I go, a houseless and helpless wanderer, to the furthest quarter of the globe ? Speak the word only, and it shall be done ! I prefer your affection, your cordial regard, in the most obscure and meanest retreat, to all that wealth can purchase, or kings can give !

Reginald, I thank you ! I acknowledge in your present language and earnestness the object of my first and only love. This return to your true character  
gives

gives me all the pleasure I am now capable of receiving. But it is too late. My son is lost; that cannot be retrieved. Your reputation is blasted; I am sorry you are returned hither; Constance is in arms against you, and I will not answer for the consequence. For myself; I am grieved to tell you so; I am ashamed of my weakness; but—my heart is broken! I loved you so entirely, that I was not able to bear any suspension of our confidence. I had passed with you through all other misfortunes, and the firmness of my temper was not shaken. For this one misfortune, that seemed the entire dissolution of our attachment, I was not prepared. I feel, every morning as I rise, the warnings of my decease. My nights are sleepless; my appetite is gone from me.

Oh, Marguerite, talk not thus! Distract me not with the most fatal of



images ! Our confidence shall return ; all the causes of your malady shall be removed ! With the causes, the symptoms, depend on it ! will disappear. Your youth, your tranquillity, your happiness, shall be renewed ! Oh, no, you shall not die ! We will yet live to love and peace !

Flatter not yourself with vain hopes, my love ! I feel something wrong within me, which is rapidly wearing my body to decay. Reconcile your mind to what very soon must happen ! Prepare yourself for being the only parent to your remaining offspring ! I have composed my spirit, and calmly wait my fate. You have now administered to me the only consolation I aspired to, by this return to your true character, which affords me a sanguine hope that you will faithfully discharge the duty to your offspring, that,

that, when I am gone, will be doubly urgent on you.

I was grieved to see that the mind of Marguerite was so deeply impressed with the notion that she had but a short time to live. I could not bear to imagine for a moment that her prognostic was just. The thought seemed capable of driving me to distraction. I however conceived that the best thing that could be done for the present, was to turn the conversation to some other topic.

Well, well, my love ! I answered. There are some things that are immediately pressing. Direct me, direct a husband, so amply convinced of your discretion, what I am to do at present ! Shall I instantly annihilate all that has made this unfortunate breach between us ; shall I resign my wealth, from whatever source derived ? Whither shall we go ? Shall we return to the

L 6

cottage

cottage of the lake? Shall we retreat into some distant part of the world?

How can you expect me, said Marguerite faintly smiling, to advise you respecting the disposal of a wealth, of the amount of which I am uninformed, and the source of which is invisible? But I guess your secret. The stranger who died your guest, was in possession of the philosopher's stone, and he has bequeathed to you his discovery. I have heard of this art, though I confess I was not much inclined to credit it. I do not ask you to confirm my conjecture; I do not wish that you should violate any engagements into which you have entered. But, upon putting circumstances together, which I have been inevitably compelled to do, I apprehend it can be nothing else. I am astonished that a conjecture so obvious, should have offered itself to my mind so late.

If

If your wealth is of any other nature, ample as it apparently is, it is a natural question to ask, to whom is it to be resigned? The ordinary wealth of the world is something real and substantial, and can neither be created nor dissipated with a breath. But, if your wealth be of the kind I have named, let me ask, is it possible to resign it? A secret is a thing with which we may choose whether we will become acquainted; but, once known, we cannot become unacquainted with it at pleasure. Your wealth, upon my supposition, will always be at your beck; and it is perhaps beyond the strength of human nature, to refuse, under some circumstances, at least in some emergencies, to use the wealth that is within our reach.

It has been our mutual misfortune that such an engine has been put into your hands. It has been your fault to  
make



make an indiscreet use of it. Gladly would I return to the tranquil and unsuspected poverty of the cottage of the lake. But that is impossible. You have lost your son; you have lost your honest fame; the life of your Marguerite is undermined and perishing. If it were possible for us to return to our former situation and our former peace, still, my Reginald! forgive me if I say, I doubt the inflexibleness of your resolution. The gift of unbounded wealth, if you possess it, and, with wealth, apparently at least, distinction and greatness, is too powerful a temptation. Nor, though I should trust your resistance, could I be pleased in a husband with the possession of these extraordinary powers. It sets too great a distance between the parties. It destroys that communion of spirit which is the soul of the marriage-tie. A consort should be a human being  
and

and an equal. But to this equality and simple humanity it is no longer in your power to return.

Circumstanced then as we now are, the marriage union, you must allow me to say, irreparably dissolved, your son lost, your fair fame destroyed, your orphan daughters to be provided for, I know not if I should advise you to forget the prerogative that has been bought for you at so dreadful a price. Beside, if I am not mistaken, there are great trials in reserve for you. I am afraid your present situation is extremely critical. I am afraid the suspicions you have excited against you, will cost you dear. At all events I believe it to be but a necessary precaution that we should fly from Constance. I have nothing therefore to recommend to you on the subject of wealth but discretion. I shall not long live to be your adviser. I shall always re-  
gard

gard the donation you have received, you cannot wonder that I should so regard it, as one of the most fearful calamities to which a human being can be exposed. If you had used your prerogative with discretion, you might perhaps, though I confess I do not see how, have escaped the obloquy of the world. Into your domestic scene, where the interest is more lively, and the watch upon you more unremitted, it must have introduced alienation and distrust. As it is, I see you surrounded with dangers of a thousand denominations. Police has its eyes upon you; superstition will regard you as the familiar of demons; avarice will turn upon you a regard of jealousy and insatiable appetite. If I could recover from the weakness that at present be-fets me, and continue to live, I foresee more and severer trials, both at home and abroad, than any I have yet sustained;

sustained ; and I am almost thankful to that providence which has decreed to take me away from the evil to come.

One thing further let me add. I will speak it, not in the character of a censor, but a friend. It must ever be right and useful that a man should be undeceived in any erroneous estimate he may make of himself. I have loved you much ; I found in you many good qualities ; my imagination decorated you in the virtues that you had not ; but you have removed the veil. An adept and an alchymist is a low character. When I married you, I supposed myself united to a nobleman, a knight and a soldier, a man who would have revolted with disdain from every thing that was poor-spirited and base. I lived with you long and happily. I saw faults ; I saw imbecilities. I did not see them with indifference ; but I endeavoured, and with a degree of success,



success, to forgive, and to forget them ; they did not contaminate and corrupt the vitals of honour. At length you have completely reversed the scene. For a soldier, you present me with a projector and a chymist, a cold-blooded mortal, raking in the ashes of a crucible for a selfish and solitary advantage. Here is an end of all genuine dignity, and the truest generosity of soul. You cannot be ingenuous ; for all your dealings are secrecy and darkness. You cannot have a friend ; for the mortal lives not that can sympathise with your thoughts and emotions. A generous spirit, Reginald, delights to live upon equal terms with his associates and fellows. He would disdain, when offered to him, decisive and clandestine advantages. Equality is the soul of all real and cordial society. A man of rank indeed does not live upon equal terms with the whole of his

his species ; but his heart also can exult ; for he has his equals. How unhappy the wretch, the monster rather let me say, that is without an equal ; that looks through the world, and in the world cannot find a brother ; that is endowed with attributes which no living being participates with him ; and that is therefore cut off for ever from all cordiality and confidence, can never unbend himself, but lives the solitary, joyless tenant of a prison whose materials are rubies and emeralds ! How unhappy this wretch ; how weak and ignoble the man that voluntarily accepts these laws of existence !

In the advice of Marguerite I saw that sound wisdom and discernment, by which in all the periods of our connection she had been so eminently characterised. With her views of the future I was not disposed to accord. I  
regarded

regarded them as obscured and discoloured by the unfortunate state of her health. I could not indeed refuse to believe that the prerogative I had received had been the parent of much domestic unhappiness. Willingly would I have resigned all that I had derived from the stranger, to be replaced in the situation in which his pernicious legacies had found me. He had robbed me of my son; he had destroyed my domestic peace; he had undermined the tranquillity and health of the partner of my life. These calamities pressed with a heavy and intolerable weight at my heart. But, if, as Marguerite affirmed, they were irretrievable, or if they could once be removed, and the domestic advantages I had heretofore enjoyed be restored, I was not disposed to fear those external mischiefs which Marguerite so feelingly predicted. I could not believe that  
I should

I should have such a league of foreign enemies to encounter, nor could I easily image to myself any external evils that it was not in the power of gold to remedy. These considerations I urged to my beloved partner, and by enforcing them endeavoured to remove from her mind those gloomy apprehensions, from the prevalence of which I feared much injury to her health. There was another circumstance I was led particularly to insist on ; I mean the nature of the secret intrusted to me.

I admire your discernment and ingenuity, Marguerite, said I, in your conjecture respecting the source of my wealth. I admire your delicacy in not pressing me to decide upon the truth of your conjecture. This only I must be permitted to say on that subject. It is a secret ; and you will perceive that the same reasons, whatever they are, which make that secret obligatory on me,



me, require that it should be respected by you. The same evils that my own indiscretion may draw on me, I shall be equally exposed to by any error or miscalculation of yours. I have therefore most earnestly and solemnly to intreat you, whatever misfortunes may hereafter befall me, in whatever perilous situation I may be involved, that you will never utter a syllable on this subject ; and that, as I am the selected depository of this secret, and alone know with certainty what is its nature, you will trust our prosperity in this point to me.—Marguerite engaged to conduct herself as I desired.

The night which succeeded this explanation, was particularly soothing and grateful to me. I was relieved from a great and oppressive burthen. I was conscious of that particular species of pleasure which arises from the resolute discharge of an heroic duty.

The

The peace I felt within, shed its gay and reviving beams upon all around me. Reconciled to myself; I was filled with sanguine and agreeable visions of the future. My mind obstinately rejected all dark and hateful presages. I had intrusted myself and the direction of my conduct, as far as it was possible for me to do so, to that better pilot, under whose guidance, if I had not avoided the rocks and quicksands of life, I had at least escaped with little comparative injury. I felt therefore as if my domestic enjoyments were restored, and the pleasures of my better years were about to run over again their auspicious career. Not so Marguerite. She was mild, gentle and soothing. Displeasure and resentment towards me were banished from her mind. She endeavoured to conquer her melancholy, and to forget the wounds that had been so fatal to her hopes.

hopes. But her endeavours were fruitless. A fixed dejection clung to her heart ; nor could the generous sweetness that pervaded her manners, hide from me entirely what was passing in her bosom.

During this interval we had talked over the plan of our future operations. Marguerite was exceedingly urgent with me to quit Constance ; nor did I, though not impressed with her sentiments, feel any reluctance to that change of scene, which, I believed, would materially contribute to the serenity of her mind and the restoration of her health. We determined on some of the cities of Italy as the next place of our residence, and, fixed, if possible, to set out some time in the next day or the day after. The plan of proceeding to France; which had lately been a favourite with me, was a favourite no longer. That had been the project of  
chearful

cheerful and wanton prosperity. It had had for its object the reestablishment of my family honours, and the elevation of my son. Now my son was lost, my wife was oppressed with languor and disease, my house was overwhelmed with sorrow. This was no time for wantonness and triumph. If I could ever hope to resume the plans my frolic fancy had sketched, an interval at least of soberer hue must first be suffered to elapse.

My mind at this time sustained a revolution sufficiently remarkable, but of which the urgency of events that immediately succeeded, prevented me from ever ascertaining whether it would have proved temporary or permanent. When I first received the donation of the stranger, my thoughts, as I have already said, were in a state of enthusiastic transport, and, amidst the golden visions in which my fancy



revelled, I became in a considerable degree alienated from domestic sentiments and pleasures. If I still loved my wife and children, it was the love of habit rather than sympathy, more an anxiety for their prosperous success in the world, than an earnest craving for their presence and intercourse. This state of intoxication and rapture had now subsided. The events of the few last weeks had sobered my thoughts. Having lost my son, and being threatened with the loss of his mother, I was roused to a sense of their value. The influx of wealth and supernatural gifts had grown familiar to my mind, and now only occupied the back-ground of the picture. I was once more a man, and I hoped to partake of the privileges and advantages of a man. The fate reserved for these hopes will speedily be seen.

Some

Some readers will perhaps ask me why, anxious as I was for the life of Marguerite, and visible as was the decline of her health, I did not administer to her of the elixir of immortality which was one of my peculiar endowments. Such readers I have only to remind, that the pivot upon which the history I am composing turns, is a mystery. If they will not accept of my communication upon my own terms, they must lay aside my book. I am engaged in relating the incidents of my life; I have no intention to furnish the remotest hint respecting the science of which I am the depository. That science affords abundant reasons why the elixir in question might not, or rather could not, be imbibed by any other than an adept.

## CHAP. X.

THE morning after my return to my family, as I sat surrounded with my girls, and endeavouring to make myself their playmate and companion, certain officers of justice belonging to the supreme tribunal of the city, entered my apartment. They were sent, as they informed me, to conduct me to prison. My blood at this intelligence mounted into my face.

To prison? cried I—wherefore?—what have I done?—I am no citizen of your state. What is the charge against me? Lead me not to prison: lead me to your chief magistrate!

You will be called up for examination, when his honour is at leisure to  
hear

hear you : in the mean time you must go to prison.

Do those who sent you, know that I am a native and a gentleman of France? They will be made to repent this insolence. Upon what pretence do they dare to act thus?

You will please not to talk of insolence to us. If you do not demean yourself quietly,——

Silence, fellow! answered I fiercely. Lead the way!

By this time the children, astonished at a scene so alarming and unintelligible to them, began to express their terror in various ways. Julia, who was ready to faint, occupied the attention of her mother. The little Marguerite clung round my knees, and expressed her emotions by shrieks and cries. To see her father about to be torn from her by four strangers, the peculiarity of whose garb of office ag-



gravated the rudeness of their countenances and the peremptoriness of their behaviour, was a spectacle which the affectionateness of her nature was unable to endure.

I will go with you presently, said I to the officers. See, how you have terrified the children !

Nay, sir, if you will behave civilly, and make it worth our while, we do not desire to hurry you.

I was stung with the brutal assurance with which they thus set the liberty of a few moments at a price to me. But I checked my impatience. I felt that it would be both foolish and degrading to enter into contention with such wretches. I turned from them proudly, and took my child in my arms.

I will not be long gone, my love ! said I. These people have made a mistake, and I shall soon be able to rectify it.

I fancy

I fancy not, muttered one of them furlily.

They shall not take you away, papa ; that they shall not ! I will hold you, and will not let you go !

You are a good girl, Marguerite ! But I know best what is proper, and you must not think to control me. The men will not do me any harm, child ; they dare not. Perhaps I shall be back to dinner, and mamma will then tell me how good you have been.

As I spoke, she looked stedfastly in my face ; and then, flinging her arms round my neck, cried, Good bye, papa ! and burst into a flood of tears.

I embraced the other children and their mother, and, saying to the latter significantly, Fear nothing ; you know I have nothing to fear !—departed with my conductors.

The way to the citadel lay through the market place. The scene was al-

ready crowded; and I had the mortification to be led along as a criminal, in the midst of a thousand gazing eyes and enquiring tongues. New as every thing connected with my present situation was to me, I had not anticipated this vexation till it arrived. I was filled with shame and impatience. To my dungeon! said I to my conductors sternly. If you had shown yourself better-humoured, cried the most brutal of them, we would have led you round by the back-way.

The master of the prison was somewhat less a savage than his officers. He knew my person, and had heard of my wealth. Does monsieur choose the best apartment, said he? Any where that I can be alone! answered I hastily: He hesitated a moment. I looked in his face: Oh, yes, you will be paid! He bowed, and showed me to a room.

I shut

I shut the door as he retired. What had happened to me was of little importance in itself. The impertinence of bailiffs and thieftakers, is of no more real moment than the stinging of a gnat. But I was so utterly unacquainted with scenes of this nature! The pride of rank that swelled within me, made every appearance of constraint galling to my sense. From the instant I was able to write man, no one, except in the voluntary compact of military service, had ever said to me, Go there! or, Do this! And now, was I to be directed by the very refuse of the species? was I to learn the prudence of not replying to their insults? was I to purchase at a stipulated price their patience and forbearance?—I request the reader to pardon me for troubling him with my novice feelings: I soon learned to un-



derstand the world—the world of a prison—better!

But, what was of more importance, I was apprehended as a criminal; I had been dragged a prisoner of justice through the streets of Constance; I was, by and by, to be subjected to the interrogatories of the municipal tribunal. I could scarcely credit my senses, that such an indignity had happened to the blood of St. Leon. It is true, I was innocent. I was conscious, whatever might be my imprudencies and offences towards my own family, that I had done nothing to merit the animadversion of public justice. But this was of no consequence. Nothing in my opinion could wipe away the disgrace of being interrogated, examined! of having for an instant imputed to me the possibility of being a criminal! I writhed under this dishonour, and felt it as a severer attack, than the question,

question, which was comparatively of ceremony and etiquette, that had oppressed me in my residence at Dresden.

The next day, when I was brought up for examination, I had expected to be the complainant, in demanding redress for the injury I had sustained. But I was mistaken.

I entered the room haughtily, and with the air of a man that felt himself aggrieved. Of this however the magistrate took no notice. Do you know, sir, said I, that I am a citizen and a gentleman of France? Are you acquainted with the treatment I have experienced? Have you lent your authority to that treatment?

Wait a few minutes, replied he with an imperious tone, and I shall be at leisure to attend to you.

I was silent. After the interval of nearly a quarter of an hour, he resumed:

You call yourself the count de St. Leon?

I do.

Perhaps, sir, you are uninformed of the purity with which justice is administered in the city within whose jurisdiction you now stand. Our state is a small one, and its magistrates are therefore enabled to discharge the office of a parent, not only to its proper citizens, but to all strangers that place themselves under its protection.

I remember, sir, that seven years ago, I and my wife and four children, sick and unfriended, were upon the point of perishing with hunger within the walls of this city!—The fact I mentioned was wholly foreign to the point with which I was at present concerned; but the parading arrogance of the man brought it forcibly to my memory, and wrung it from my lips.

*Monsieur*

*Monsieur le comte*, replied he, you are petulant. It is not the office of a state to feed the souls it contains; it could not do that without making them slaves. Its proper concern is to maintain them in that security and freedom of action, which may best enable them to support themselves.

I suppressed the emotions which the tone of this speech excited. I was unwilling to enter into contention with a man whom I regarded as inexpressibly my inferior.

Is it, cried I sternly, a part of the justice you boast of, to drag a man of rank and a stranger from his home, without any intimation of the cause of his being so treated, and then, instead of investigating immediately the charge alleged against him, to send him to prison unheard? I disdain to mention the behaviour of your officers: those  
things



things naturally grow out of the abuses practised by their superiors.

The mode of our proceeding, replied he, depends upon the seriousness of the crime imputed. If a man of distinction labours under a slight accusation only, we then treat him with all proper forbearance and respect. But, when he is suspected of a crime of more than ordinary magnitude, that alters the case. The man who has ceased to respect himself, must look for no respect from others.

I was for a moment thunderstruck and speechless. At length fiercely I cried, Produce my accusers!

That is not the mode of proceeding in Constance. I have certain questions to propound to you. When you have answered them, we shall see what is to be done next.

Carry

Carry me before the prince-bishop of your city! If I am to be examined further, let it be by your sovereign!

The prince-bishop, moved by the state of our affairs in matters of religion, has been prevailed on to delegate his juridical authority. I am the person to whom the cognisance of your business belongs, and at certain times, aided by my assessors, have the power of life and death within this city. You have had every indulgence to which you are entitled, and it will be your wisdom to be no further refractory.

Propose your questions!

A person, apparently greatly advanced in years, arrived in the autumn of the preceding year at a humble domain you at that time cultivated, called the cottage of the lake. It is to him that my questions will principally relate.

I stood aghast. The words of the magistrate were most unwelcome sounds.

sounds. I remembered that the stranger had said to me, When I am once buried, speak of me, and, if possible, think of me no more. I replied with eagerness and alarm :

Of that person I have nothing to say. Spare your questions ; I have no answer to return you !

What was his name ?

I know not.

His country ?

I cannot inform you.

It is understood that he died, or in some manner disappeared, while under your protection. Yet in the registers of the church there is no notice of that event. If he died, no application was made for the rites of religion to him dying, or to his body when his spirit had deserted it. You are required to answer, what became of him or his remains ?

I have

I have already told you, that from me you will obtain no information.

One question more, fir. Seven years ago, you tell me, you and your family were perishing with hunger. Soon after, you removed from obscure lodgings in this city to the cottage of the lake, and seemed to be laudably employed in earning your subsistence with the labour of your hands. But within the last six months the scene is wholly changed. You appear to have suddenly grown rich, and here, and in other parts of Germany, have actually disbursed considerable sums. Whence comes this change?

The train of questions thus proposed to me, impelled me to a serious reply.

*Monsieur le juge*, said I, I am a stranger, a native of France, and a man of rank in my own country. I have paid your state the compliment of choosing it for my residence. I have expended my



my industry, I expend my wealth among you. I have comported myself as a peaceable inhabitant. No action of my life has brought scandal upon your state, or disturbed the peace and tranquillity of your affairs. I cannot collect from any thing you have said, that I have any accuser, or that any charge has been alleged against me. Till that happens, I cannot fall under your animadversion. I am a man of generous birth and honourable sentiments. To myself and my own conscience only am I accountable for my expenditure and my income. I disdain to answer to any tribunal on earth an enquiry of this sort. And now, sir, in conclusion, what I demand of you is, first, my liberty, and secondly, an ample reparation for the interruption I have sustained, and the insults to which I have causelessly been exposed.

You

You are mistaken, sir, said the magistrate. What you mention may be the rule of administering justice in some states. They may decide, if they think proper, that some open act, apparently of a criminal description, must be alleged against a man, before he can become an object of animadversion to the state. But in Constance, as I have already told you, the government assumes to act the part of a parent to its subjects. I sit here, not merely to investigate and examine definite acts, but as a *censor morum*; and I should commit a breach of the oath of my office, if I did not lend a vigilant attention to the behaviour and conduct of every one within my jurisdiction. The city of Constance requires that nothing immoral, licentious, or of suspicious character, shall be transacted within its walls. Your proceedings have escaped notice too long ;  
much

much longer than they would have done but for your late absence. In cases where what is committed is merely immoral or licentious, we content ourselves with sending the offender out of our walls. But your case is of a very complicated nature. It has scandalised all the inhabitants of our virtuous and religious city. Unless you answer my enquiries, and give a very clear and satisfactory account of your wealth, I am bound to believe that there is something in the business that will not bear the light. The coincidence of times obliges me to connect the disappearance of your guest, and the sudden reverse of your fortune. this connection gives rise to the most alarming suspicions. I have therefore to inform you that, unless you honourably clear up these suspicions by the most ample communication, my duty directs me to remand you to prison, and

and to assure you that you will not be liberated thence till you have satisfied the whole of my interrogatories.

Think deliberately, answered I, of your decision before you form it. Your prisons I despise ; but I will not suffer my reputation and my honour to be trifled with. I came before you willingly, though I could easily have avoided doing so ; because I was eager to clear my fame. I expected accusers, and I knew I could confound accusation. But what is this that you call justice ? You put together circumstances in your own mind ; you form conjectures ; and then, without information, accuser or oath, without the semblance of guilt, you condemn me to prison, and expect to extort from me confession. In defect of articles of charge I disdain to answer ; the only return a man of honour should make to loose conjectures  
and



and random calumnies, is silence. I am descended from a race of heroes, knights of the cross, and champions of France; and their blood has not degenerated in my veins. I feel myself animated by the soul of honour, and incapable of crime. I know my innocence, and I rest upon it with confidence. Your vulgar citizens, habituated to none but the groveling notions of traffic and barter, are not the peers of St. Leon, nor able to comprehend the views and sentiments by which he is guided.

You are mighty well-spoken, monsieur St. Leon, replied the magistrate, and your words are big and sounding. But we know that the devil can assume the form of an angel, and that the most infamous and profligate character can pronounce with emphasis sentiments of the purest virtue. You are pleased to decide that the presumptions against you

you are nothing but calumnies. Is it nothing that, having received a stranger and retained him with you for months, you endeavoured to conceal this fact, and never suffered him to be seen by a human creature? Is his final disappearance nothing? Is it nothing that, supposing him to be dead, as he probably is, you denied to his remains the rites of funeral, and refuse to tell what is become of the body? Is it nothing that, upon the death of this stranger, you, who were before in a state almost of penury, suddenly appear to be possessed of unbounded riches? Where is the will of this stranger? In what archives have you deposited the declaration of his wealth? Let me tell you, sir, that these presumptions, which you call nothing, form a body of circumstantial evidence that, in many countries, would have led you to the scaffold as a murderer. But the laws

laws of Constance, which you audaciously revile, are the mildest in the universe. Here we never put a man to death but on his own confession. We simply condemn him to perpetual imprisonment, or until he makes a declaration of his guilt. You refuse to declare the name or country of the man whom you are suspected of murdering, and then have the assurance to boast that no private accuser rises against you. No, sir, we know there can be no private accuser, where the connections of the party can be successfully concealed. But shall this concealment, which is an aggravation of the murder, prove its security? In conclusion, you boast of your blood and heroic sentiments, and rail at our citizens as shopkeepers and merchants. Let me tell you, sir, shopkeepers and merchants though we are, we should scorn to conduct ourselves in the obscure

scure and suspicious manner that you have done. And, now I have taken the trouble to refute your flimsy pretences, which it was wholly unnecessary for me to do, I have done with you. You know your destination, unless you are prepared immediately to give a satisfactory account of yourself and your proceedings.

Finding it impossible to make on this man the impression I desired, I declined entering into further parley; and, telling him that I should convey a representation of my case to my native sovereign, and did not doubt soon to make him feel the rashness of his proceeding, I withdrew, in the custody of the officers who had conducted me to the scene of audience. I was, I confess, struck with the coincidence of circumstances, which the magistrate had placed in a light equally unexpected and forcible, and which I now saw



calculated to expose me to the most injurious suspicions. I was not disposed in the smallest degree to yield to the attack, but I felt a desire to act deliberately and with caution. The whole of what I had heard was utterly unforeseen, and it was with peculiar anguish that I became aware of this new consequence of the stranger's pernicious donation. This was a consequence that no resignation, no abjuration of his bequests could cure ; and that must be stood up to with manly courage, if any hope were entertained of averting it.

## CHAP. XI.

THE appearance of wealth that accompanied me had by this time made its impression upon my keepers ; and one of them now informed me, that monsieur Monluc, an agent of the court of France, who was making a tour of several of the German states by order of his sovereign, had arrived the night before at the city of Constance. There was no representative of my country regularly resident here, and I immediately felt the presence of Monluc to be the most fortunate event that could have occurred for effecting my honourable deliverance. Selfishness and avarice, it may be thought, would rather have impelled the persons

who had me in custody, to conceal from me a circumstance calculated to deprive them of an advantageous prey. But in those groveling souls from whom riches never fail to extort homage, however strange it may seem, the homage often appears disinterested. They pay it by a sort of irresistible instinct ; and, admiring what they covet, at an awful distance, with difficulty assume the courage to pollute their worship with ideas of calculation and gain.

I immediately addressed a memorial to this gallant soldier, with whose person indeed I was unacquainted, but the fame of whose spirit and enterprise had not failed to have reached me. I represented to him that I was a Frenchman of family and distinction ; that I had been seized upon and was retained in prison by the magistrates here, without accuser or the hope of a trial ;  
that

that I had not been guilty of the shadow of a crime ; and that I knew the benignity and courage of my sovereign would never permit a subject of France to languish under calumny and oppression in a foreign country. I added, that he would do an acceptable service to king Francis, to whom I had the honour to be known, by interfering in my favour ; and therefore intreated him to obtain for me immediate justice and deliverance. Monluc returned me an answer by the bearer of my memorial, assuring me that he would lose no time in enquiring into the merits of my case, and that I might depend upon receiving every assistance from him that a man of honour could desire.

The warmth and frankness of this answer filled me with hope, for there was no deliverance from my present situation that I could contemplate with satisfaction, but such a one as should



be accompanied with reparation and eclat. Three days however elapsed before I heard again from the French envoy. On the morning of the fourth he announced his intention of visiting me ; and, about an hour after, arrived at the prison. His appearance was striking. He was tall, slender and well made, with a freedom of carriage, not derived from the polish of courts, but which appeared to flow from the manliness and active energies of his mind. His hair and complexion were dark ; the former, though he was still young, rather scantily shaded a high and ample forehead. His features were expressive of the sanguine and adust temper of his mind, and, though his eye was animated, his countenance, as he entered, struck me as particularly solemn.

You are the count de St. Leon?  
said he.

I am.

You

You sent me a memorial a few days ago complaining of the tribunal of this city: I am afraid, sir, I can do nothing for you.

My countenance fell as he spoke; I gasped for breath. I had conceived a most favourable impression of him as he entered, and my disappointment was particularly cruel. I had said in my heart, This is the very man to rescue my injured fame.

I see, sir, you are disappointed, resumed he. I have not given up the affair: if I had, this visit, which I design as a mark of attention, would be an insult. The moment I received your memorial, I paid the utmost regard to it. If the affair were as you represented it, I knew I could not do any thing more acceptable to my sovereign than interfere in your behalf. I have spent the whole interval in investigating the case. I have seen the

magistrate who committed you ; I have visited the spot where your crime is alleged to have been perpetrated ; I have had an interview with your wife.

Well, sir, cried I, alarmed and impatient—well, sir, and the result ?

Appearances are uncommonly strong against you : they can scarcely be stronger. But you have a right to be heard ; it is for the sake of discharging that last act of justice that you see me this morning.

Great God ! exclaimed I, overwhelmed with chagrin, is it possible that my countryman, the man to whom I was proud and happy to appeal, the gallant Monluc, should believe me a murderer ? I swear by every thing that is sacred, by the blood of him that died for me on the cross, and by my eternal salvation, that I am as innocent as the child unborn !

I am

I am glad to hear you express yourself with this emphasis and fervour. I cannot but say that to my own feelings it has great weight. But I must not suffer myself as a man, and still less in the public capacity in which I stand, to be overcome and confounded by your asseverations. There is a connected and a most unfavourable story against you: this it is incumbent on you to clear up.

And you say, you have seen my wife? I was distracted and overwhelmed by Monluc's way of putting the question. I was divided between my anxiety to be justified, and the solemn mystery of the affair to which his enquiries led; and I probably spoke thus from an unconscious desire to gain time.

Yes, that is another presumption in your favour. Madame de St. Leon is perhaps the most striking and extraor-



dinary woman I ever saw. Of the husband of such a woman, especially when he appeared to be the object of her attachment, I should be always inclined to think well. Madame de St. Leon pleaded for you with earnestness and affection. But, amidst all her ardour, I could perceive that she felt there was something mysterious and unpleasant in the affair, that she was herself unable to develop.

As Monluc spoke, I saw that I had failed in one of the main anchors of my hope. I thought that no one could have talked with my beloved Marguerite, and have left her with the opinion that I was a murderer. How did this happen? Was she lukewarm and unfaithful in my vindication?

What she, continued my countryman, I could see, was not only unable to explain, but did not fully understand, it is you alone can clear; the conceal-

concealment of the stranger, his dis-  
appearance, what became of the body,  
and your own sudden transition from  
poverty to wealth.

I was by this time fully sensible of  
the nature of my situation. I sum-  
moned my fortitude ; I felt that I had  
no longer any hope but in the dignity  
of innocence.

You call on me for explanation, re-  
plied I. Can you not conceive, gal-  
lant Monluc, that I may be able to  
resolve your doubts, and yet that I will  
not? Explanation is not the business  
of a man of honour. He cannot stoop  
to it. He will win the applause and  
approbation of mankind, if won, in si-  
lence. He will hold on the even course  
of a generous spirit, and turn neither  
to the right nor the left, to court  
the suffrage, or deprecate the condem-  
nation of a giddy multitude. Such  
my brave countryman, have been the

maxims of my past life ; such will be the maxims of my future.

I admire, answered Monluc, at least the gallantry of these sentiments, though I may be inclined to doubt their prudence. But, if such is your determination, permit me to say, you have no concern with me. He who resolutely withholds explanation, must arm himself with patience, and either wait the operation of time, or rest satisfied with the consciousness of his innocence.

And is that all ? Will there not be some noble spirits, who, separating themselves from the herd, will judge of him by what they feel in their own breasts, and be drawn to him with an irresistible impulse ? Was it not natural that I should expect Monluc to be one of these ? It would be hard indeed, if he who disdains to temporise with popularity, and to vindicate himself

self from the ungenerous constructions of sordid minds, should not by that very proceeding secure the friendship and sympathy of those whose friendship it will be most grateful to him to possess.

The friends of an innocent man, whom a combination of circumstances has exposed to the most painful suspicions, must always be few. He can scarcely expect the acquittal and sympathy of a stranger. I must know, I must have felt and observed in a man a thousand virtues, before I can be entitled to treat accumulated presumptions against him as nothing.

And thus then are to end my hopes in Monluc? He does not feel that I am innocent? He does not recognise in me the countenance, the voice, the turn of thought, of a brother, a man no less incapable than himself of every thing disgraceful and ignominious?

Be



Be it so! I will, as you advise me, rest upon the consciousness of my innocence. A Frenchman, the descendant of illustrious ancestors, long an exile, long the victim of adversity, but at all times conscious of the purity of my sentiments and the integrity of my conduct, I will not suffer myself to be overwhelmed with this last desertion, this ultimate refusal of justice!

Count de St. Leon! your appeal is full of energy. In whatever way I decide, it will leave an unpleasant sensation in my breast. Let us suppose that, as a private man, I could take you to my arms, and dismiss every unfavourable appearance from my mind. You must remember, that I am here as a public character, and that only as a public character am I capable of affording you assistance. Thus situated, I am bound to resist the impulses of a romantic and irregular confidence,  
and

and to do nothing of which I shall not be able to render a clear and intelligible account.

Let us not part thus ! It is not the vindication of your character to the world, with which we are at present concerned. It is only necessary that you should furnish a sufficient ground to justify me to myself for interfering in your behalf. Explain to me the particulars of your case, in confidence if you will, but fully and without reserve. I will not abuse your confidence. I will make no use of your communication, but such as you shall yourself approve. Only enable me to have a reason for acting, that is not merely capable of being felt, but that, I may know, is in its own nature capable of being stated to another. It is upon me that you call to take certain measures ; you must enable me to judge of their propriety.

You

You are mistaken when you suppose the appearances against you to be slight. It is not a slight circumstance, that you profess to be ignorant of, or have refused to disclose, the country, the connections, and even the name of the stranger whom you so anxiously concealed. The disappearance of his body is still more extraordinary. What intelligible motive, except a guilty one, can I assign for that? But your sudden wealth immediately after this disappearance, is especially material. It is a broad and glaring fact, that men cannot shut their eyes on, if they would. The chain and combination of events, that proceeds systematically from link to link, is the criterion of guilt and the protector of reputation. Your case, as it now stands, is scarcely to be termed equivocal: upon the supposition of your criminality all is plain and easy to be accounted

counted for ; upon any other supposition it appears an inscrutable mystery. Place but the balance even ; present to me an exposition of these facts, that shall make your innocence not less probable than your guilt ; and, as I feel myself interested for you and your family, and as the presumption, when matters are doubtful, ought always to be on the favourable side, I consent to be your friend !

How unfortunate, I exclaimed, am I doomed to be ! Your proposal is liberal and generous ; but I must refuse it ! My story is an unhappy one : particulars have been reposed in my fidelity which I am not at liberty to communicate, but which, if communicated, you would not regard as dishonourable. I may be made the martyr of infamy, and the abhorrence of my species ; I can endure adversity and anguish ; I can die ; but that which  
you



you demand from me, never can be confided to any mortal ear !

As you please, rejoined Monluc. The secrets of a dead man, to be preserved after his death, and that to the ruin of him who is their depository, must, I believe, be villainous secrets ; and the secret of a villain no one is bound to observe. You must further give me leave to tell you that, whatever a high-strained sense of honour might dictate in that point, the fortune you possess is your own affair, and to dissipate or not the mystery which hangs upon that, is wholly at your discretion. But I have already advanced as far, perhaps further than circumstances or propriety could justify, and there can now be no more parley between us.

Monluc, cried I, I submit ! However harsh your decision is as towards me, however painful and unfortunate its

its consequences, I will admit it to be that which duty prescribes to you. I struggle, I contend, no further. One thing only I would willingly obtain of you, that you would interpose your influence to obtain for me the society and intercourse of my family. The transaction of this day will then be remembered by me with respect towards you, and a melancholy regret that I could not entitle myself to your esteem. I shall recollect with pleasure that I owe something to the generosity of Monluc.

Incredible pertinacity ! exclaimed my visitor with a voice of perplexity and astonishment. What am I to conceive of you ? Under what appearance shall I consider you in the records of my memory ? Your silence is the indication of guilt, and in that indication I ought to acquiesce. Yet the fortitude of your manner, and something,

thing, I know not what, of emotion, that your manner produces in my own bosom, would fain persuade me that you are innocent. Why will you leave me a prey to this contention of thought? If all men constituted as I am, were to feel in you, as it were, the magnetism of innocence, shame, the simple inference of understanding, and the general sense of mankind, would oblige them to treat you as guilty. What I can however, be assured I will chearfully do for you. I cannot deliver you from prison, but I will not fail to obtain the mitigation you ask. Farewel!

Such was the issue of my interview with Monluc. It was clear that my reputation was wounded beyond the power of remedy. While the question had only been of a magistrate, haughty, supercilious, insolent and unfeeling, I flattered myself that the harshness of the

the conclusions that were drawn, might be wholly ascribed to the depravity of his character. But Monluc was the reverse of this man. He was not less generous and heroic, than the magistrate was gross and illiberal. His desire to relieve me was not less apparent, than the magistrate's eagerness to oppress. Yet his conclusion was the same, and was felt by me so much the more bitterly, in proportion to the humanity, the kindness, the intrepidity and the virtue of the man from whom it flowed. Virtue and vice, barbarism and refinement, were equally engaged in the concert against me, and there was no chance I should triumph in a contention with so many enemies.

I might now be said to have reached the end of my adventure: I had closed one grand experiment upon the donation of the stranger. What had it produced



produced to me? Not one atom of the benefits I anticipated; not a particle of those advantages which a little while ago had made the intoxication of my waking dreams. Its fruits had been distasteful and loathsome. Whether I looked to my person, my family or my fame, I had felt in all the miserable effects of this treacherous and delusive gift. My person was shut up in prison; and I was now to make an experiment whether, by clandestine and secret proceedings, wealth could restore to me the liberty of which wealth had deprived me. My family was blasted: my wife was struck to the heart, and no mortal skill could restore the wound she had suffered; my son was gone unaided into voluntary exile, that he might shun the contagion of my follies; what was I to do with the poor remains of my house, forlorn, dejected and wretched? The wound

wound my good-name had received, was of the most decisive species. When I first encountered contumely at Dresden, and was called on for explanation by Coligny, the difficulties of my condition struck anguish to my soul. But what were they, compared with what had now overtaken me? I was charged with robbery and murder, with every thing that combines the whole species against the perpetrator, and resolves them without sense of compunction to extirpate him from the face of the earth. Perhaps it was only by the courtesy of the laws of this state, that I was permitted my choice between an ignominious death and perpetual imprisonment. I might possibly indeed escape from my confinement; I might pass into a distant country; I might be fortunate enough to cut off all connection between my past and my future life, and thus enter  
upon

upon a new career. But this to a man of honourable mind is a miserable expedient. With what feelings does he recollect, that there is a spot where his name is abhorred, where a story is told against him to excite the wonder of the ignorant and the torpid feelings of the sluggish soul, a story to darken with new infamy the records of guilt, and to infect the imagination of the solitary man with nameless horrors? To be the theme of such a tale, is no common evil. No matter how far the man to whom it relates, shall remove from the detested spot; the spot itself with all its chain of circumstances, will often recur; the voices that repulsed and humbled him, will ring in his ear; the degraded figure he made, will rise for ever fresh to his imagination. He cannot ascend to any free and lofty sentiment; he cannot attain to the healthful tone of unblemished virtue;

virtue; wherever he goes, he carries the arrow of disgrace in his bosom, and, when he would erect his head on high, it reminds him of the past, and stings him to the heart.

If the consciousness of all this would have been painful to any other man, what was it to me, who had been brought up from my infancy in the opinion that fame was the first of all human possessions, and to whom honour and an unimpeached integrity had ever been more necessary than my daily food, or than the life which that food supported? What would I not have given, could I but have returned to the situation in which the inauspicious arrival of the stranger had found me? But that was impossible. If all that I had recently passed through could but have proved a dream, if I could have awaked and freed myself from the phantoms of this horrible



vision, how happy beyond all names of happiness should I by such an event have been made? What a lesson would it have taught me of the emptiness and futility of human wishes? What a sovereign contempt would it have impressed upon me for wealth and all its train of ostentation? How profound a feeling of contentment with humble circumstances and a narrow station would it have produced in my mind? Alas, the conception of those advantages and that peace was the illusion, and not the evils I had sustained, and from which I could not escape!

## CHAP. XII.

MEANWHILE it was necessary that I should make the best of the present circumstances. My heart was wounded; my spirit was in a manner broken; but not so utterly withered and destroyed, as to make me rest supine in perpetual imprisonment. I felt with equal conviction and pungency that my character and my happiness had sustained the deepest injuries; but I felt it incumbent on me to collect and improve the fragments that remained. For some days indeed after the conference with Monluc I was sunk in the deepest dejection. But, as that dejection subsided, I began to turn a steady attention upon the future.

I recollected that an eternal and inexhaustible gift deserved to be made the subject of more than one experiment, before a decision was formed upon its merits. I shall become wiser, said I, as I go forward. Experience, however bitter, will teach me sagacity and discrimination. My next experiment shall be made with more prudence and a soberer gradation. I will remove to some distant country, where the disadvantages of my past adventures shall not follow me. I will take a new name. I shall then enjoy the benefit of a tyro just entering a scene, to all the personages of which he is wholly unknown. I shall be like a serpent that has stripped its tarnished and wrinkled skin, and comes forth in all the gloss and sleekness of youth. Surely, in an unknown land, with the prejudice of wealth in my favour, and no prejudices against me, I shall know  
how

how to conduct myself so as to obtain honour and respect. It is impossible that inexhaustible wealth and immortal youth, gifts so earnestly coveted by every creature that lives, gifts which if I were known to possess, my whole species from the mere impulses of envy would probably combine to murder me, as not able to endure the sight of one of themselves so elevated above his brethren,—it is impossible that such gifts should not be pregnant with variety of joy.

Marguerite had greatly contributed to raise me from the dejection, into which my imprisonment and the conference of Monluc had sunk me. She was my better genius. I had been so accustomed to receive consolation from her lips in the most trying circumstances, that now the very sound of her voice was able to smooth my wrinkled brow, and calm my agitated spirit.



I listened as to the sound of an angelic lyre; I was all ear; I drank in the accents of her tongue; and, in the dear delight, my cares were hushed, and my sorrows at an end. She talked to me of her daughters, whom she represented as about to have no protector but their father; she urged me to watch over them, and to take such steps as should most conduce to their future virtue and happiness; she pointed out the practicability of escape, and recommended to me to fly to some distant country: the dreams of future prosperity from the gifts of the stranger were not hers; they were all my own. It was inexpressibly affecting at this time to receive consolation from her, who had no consolation in her own breast, who had bid farewell to all the gay attractions of the world, and talked familiarly of her death as a thing certain to happen in no very long time.

She

She had lost the purest gratifications of the domestic scene; she had lost her son; her heart was broken; yet with her dying accents she sought to dispel retrospect and inspire cheerfulness, in the breast of her husband.

The reader may perhaps imagine that I was something too sanguine, when, surrounded with jailors and all the precautions of a prison, I planned the nature and scene of my next residence exactly as if I had been a person at large. But I took it for granted that the power of money I possessed, would easily unlock to me the gates of my captivity. I believed that, upon the lowest calculation, personal liberty was clearly included among the gifts of the stranger. Impressed with this opinion, I fixed upon a negro, a servant of the prison, and who had the keys of my apartment, as the subject of my pecuniary experiment.

The idea of applying to him had perhaps first occurred to me, from the mere circumstance of my seeing him more frequently than any other attendant of the prison. When I thought further of the matter, I judged from the meanness of his rank and his apparent poverty, that I could not have chosen better. So far as related to the sum to be paid as the price of my liberty, it was indeed indifferent to me whether it were large or small. I had however suffered so much from the inconsiderate lavishing of wealth, that I had no inclination on the present occasion to make ostentation of more than was necessary. But, what was of most importance to me, I was desirous that my first experiment should be a successful one. Though not unaware of the power of gold, I conceived that, among persons of middling rank and easier circumstances, there

there might be varieties of disposition, and I might be mistaken in my choice. Some might have the whim of integrity, or might place a sturdy sort of pride in showing that they were content with what they had, and were too high for a bribe. There might be persons who, though of plebeian rank, might value reputation as much as ever I had done, and be of opinion that no advance of station could compensate for the name or the consciousness of dishonour. These distinctions may seem an idle and superfluous refinement, when it is considered that I had the power of raising my bribe to the level of any man's honesty or pride be it as great as it might; and it may be thought that my offer might be so increased, as to be too dazzling for any mortal firmness to resist. Be that as it will, I am merely stating the re-



flections that passed through my mind, not entering into their vindication.

Taking the first opportunity then of accosting this man when he was alone with me, I addressed him thus :

My good friend, are not you poor ?

Yes, fir.

Would not you readily do me a kindness ?

If my master give me leave, I will.

You mistake me. Would you be my friend ?

I do not know what you mean, fir. I have been used to call the man I love, my friend. If you mean that, you know I cannot choose whether I will be a man's friend ; it comes of itself.

Can I not make you my friend ?

That is, make me love you ?

I was surpris'd at the propriety of his answers. I am unable at this distance of time to recal the defects of his language ;

language ; and I disdain the mimic toil of inventing a jargon for him suitable to the lowness of his condition : the sense of what he said I faithfully report. I had before been struck with a certain correctness of thinking in him ; but I now examined his countenance more attentively than I had ever before done, and thought I could distinctly trace in it the indications of a sound understanding and an excellent heart.

I do not know, sir, continued he. If I see that you are a good man, I believe I shall love you. But if it happened that you were good and generous to me, I am sure I should love you very much.

You are very poor ?

So they tell me. I never had more than a shilling or two at a time in my life.

It is a very sad thing to be poor ?

O 6

Why,

Why, yes, so I have heard, fir. But, for my own part, I am always merry and gay.

My good fellow, I will make you rich.

Thank you, fir! But what good will that do me?

You are a servant: I will make you a master of servants.

Now, that I should not like at all. I am merry, because I am light-hearted. If I had money, and property to take care of, and servants to direct, I am afraid they would make me grave and suspicious, and in every respect unlike what you see me.

Is it possible you should be pleased with your present situation, under the orders of one man in a house, and obliged to play the tyrant yourself to the rest?

Why, as you say, fir, there may be more agreeable situations than the life  
of

of a jail. But, as to being under orders, I have no objection to that. I never knew any other condition, and therefore I am contented. It is not pleasant indeed to have a master who is always scolding and dissatisfied; but the gentleman I serve at present is reasonable; I know how to content him, and, when I have done that, he leaves me to please myself. You offer me money: now, sir, that is not what I call being generous; I count nothing for much, except when a man shows me he has bowels, and convinces me that he thinks justice due even to a negro. I dare say however you designed it for generosity, and expected something from me in return. Tell me what it is you want, and whatever I can do with propriety, you may depend on it I will.

Do you approve of a man's being deprived of his liberty?

Will



Will you please to tell me what you mean by liberty? You offered me just now what you called liberty and independence; and I am content to be a servant.

Would you be pleased, instead of being a turnkey, to have the key turned on yourself?

That I should not. I understand the disagreeableness of that well enough, for when I first entered this place, it was as a prisoner.

If then, my good fellow, you were convinced that I was a man disposed to be generous to you in your own way, and to deserve your attachment and love, surely you would not refuse to deliver me from a situation which you have yourself felt to be so disagreeable and calamitous.

I understand you now, sir. I have already a master with whom I am satisfied, and I do not wish to change my service.

service. When I was a prisoner, he found out that I was innocent ; he got me cleared, and gave me employment. I am put here for the exprefs purpose of seeing the prisoners in safe custody. That is the contract between me and my master. When I took the keys, by that action I pledged myself to be faithful to my trust ; and the nobleness of my master's behaviour to me in removing me from being a prisoner to be a free servant, is a double bond upon my fidelity. I would sooner consent to be torn limb from limb, than fail in what is expected from me. You may be generous to a harmless stranger ; you have most reason to be generous to a man you love ; but, if you would heap benefits upon me merely because I proved myself a villain, I can only say, it would be disgraceful to be the object of your favour.

Thus

Thus saying, he quitted me, and withdrew from further parley. The conversation in which we had engaged, though I had had considerable experience in the world, was altogether new to me, and overwhelmed me with astonishment. I found in this trial, that the power of money was subject to limitations, of which previously I had not been in the slightest degree aware. I thought that nothing but the most extraordinary degree of resolution and self-denial could enable a man to resist its enticements; and I had even been told, though I did not believe, that every man had his price, and a bribe capable of indefinite augmentation, must be in all cases victorious. Yet here was a poor creature that was utterly exempt from its operation. He had no sense of those attractions, which so often degrade the best, and convert virtue into the most shameless

shameless profligacy. It cost him no effort to be honest, and he uttered sentiments that would have given lustre to the most heroic character, without any consciousness of their greatness. What I had seen, led me also to reflect on another singularity I discerned in him. In the midst of the admirable, I had almost said the sublime, integrity he discovered, (for is it not a criterion of the sublime to be great without an effort?) he was destitute of knowledge, of intellectual cultivation, and all those exquisite sensations that most distinguish the man from the brute. He passed on quietly in the road of ordinary life, and thought not of the ambition to be wise or great, to be honoured by thousands, or a benefactor to ages yet unborn. Kings might have confessed their inferiority to this man. But is he to be regarded as the model  
of



of what a human creature should be wished to be? Oh, no!

But the most memorable feeling impressed upon me by this conversation, was a conviction of what I had been backward to confess, that knaves were the persons to whose assistance and concert I must look, and that I must be upon my guard against an honest man. No one was qualified to be my coadjutor, till he had proved himself unworthy of all just and honourable society. The friend I must seek, was a man whose very soul melted at a bribe, whom money would seduce to perpetrate whatever his judgment most abhorred. Honour and integrity in the most refined and the rudest state, Monluc and the negro both refused. It is impossible to conceive a sensation more painful and humiliating, than was this conviction to my mind.

I was

I was not long left at leisure for these reflections. In a few minutes the master of the prison entered my apartment, and along with him the negro whom I had endeavoured to prevail on to assist in restoring me to liberty. The master began to reproach me in very harsh terms for attempting to seduce his servant from his duty, and asked me what sort of enjoyment or satisfaction a man could have in life, if he could not depend upon the people he put into his employment? To this I answered with sternness, that I should hold no debate about right and wrong with a jailor; that he might depend upon it I would leave no stone unturned to set myself free, and, what was more, that I would be free; and that, for his part, it was his business to keep me if he could, but not to insult me. I therefore insisted upon his quitting the room.

And

And what use, replied the fellow, do you think now there is in putting yourself in a passion? If I have not a right to speak to you, I know what I have a right to do, put you in the strong room, and load you with irons.

I turned my back upon him. And how came you, said I to the negro, to go and betray me? I should have expected better things of you. If you refused to serve me, at least you needed not have endeavoured to hurt me.

I did nothing but my duty, sir. I have no wish to hurt you: but it is my business, not merely to take care of my master's interests myself, but to see that they are not injured by any body else. If he was not put on his guard, you might have been more successful with the next turnkey you endeavoured to bribe.

You will find it more your interest, monsieur, interposed the jailor, to talk  
to

to me than to my servant. You are determined to be free, you say. If that is the case, and it is to happen, who has so good a right to benefit by your resolution as I have?

My eyes were opened in a moment. I saw that the knave whose rigour and sternness could not hold out against the warmth of a bribe, the friend of whose assistance I was in want, stood before me.

I do not wonder, proceeded he, that you preferred applying to one of my servants. Their honesty must be expected to be had at a cheaper market. But, for my part, I am determined that no man shall ever pass these walls, without my being the richer. If then your escape is a thing that must happen, let us see what you can afford to give me for it.

Dear master, interposed the negro, you surely will not listen to the gentleman's



man's offer. When I refused to betray my trust, it is impossible you should consent to betray yours !

Hold your tongue, blockhead ! said the other. Do not you see that monsieur is determined to escape ? I know he is rich. Though you have refused a bribe, I am sure that all your fellows will not. The thing will happen sooner or later in spite of every thing I can do ; and there can be no harm in my helping to bring about, what it is impossible I should prevent.

A morality like this seems exactly in its place in the breast of a jailor. We had already made some progress in adjusting the terms of our contract, when the keeper of the prison interposed,

But, monsieur, you will please to remark, that this is an affair that will be attended with difficulty. Whatever passes between you and me must be

be a secret. Your escape will be a thing open and notorious, and you must have a confederate, that I may not bear the blame of it. You must therefore take my black here along with you, that his flight may cause all the blame to fall upon him.

Oh, pray, master, said the negro, do not part with me! I love you, and will do any thing in the world, if you will let me stay. You saved my life for aught I know, and made a man of me again; you cannot think what good it does me to serve a master that has been so kind to me!

Get you gone! replied his owner. You are of no use to me; you are not fit for a jail; you are so simple, I cannot tell what to do with you!

Indeed I do not like to go with this gentleman; it will break my heart. He said, he would be generous and kind to me, if I turned a villain; I  
shall

shall never be able, and shall never desire to earn his kindness: but you rewarded me, because I was innocent. He said, he would make a master of me; and I am better as I am; I had much rather be a servant.

The difficulties of this poor fellow were soon silenced by the peremptoriness of his master. The jailor told him that he would do him a great service, by thus giving his master an opportunity of representing him as the traitor; and, with this consideration, the negro dried his tears, and with a reluctant heart consented to accompany me. Thus were his exemplary fidelity and affection rewarded! So little do some men seem capable of feeling the value of attachment! The character of the master was a singular one. The meanness and mercenariness of his spirit were unredeemed by a single virtue. He was avarice personified.

But

But he had found or imagined an interest in taking this negro, who had been wantonly thrown into prison by a former tyrant, for his servant; and this the poor fellow, in the simplicity of his heart, had mistaken for an act of exalted generosity. His avarice had swallowed up all his other passions; and his servants had neither impatience nor insolence to encounter from him: weighed therefore in the balance of the negro's experience, he appeared a miracle of mildness and benevolence.

Our bargain was at length concluded; and, the next time Marguerite came to visit me, I announced to her the success of my negotiation. Before we parted, we sent for the jailor, and discussed with him the road I should take. My purpose was to pass into Italy; and Marguerite undertook by midnight to have every thing prepared to convey us to the foot of the moun-



tains. This point being adjusted, the keeper of the prison left us ; and, tenderly embracing Marguerite, I besought her to congratulate me upon the recovery of my liberty. She had heard however of the infamous nature of the charge against me, and, though she yielded it no credit, I could easily perceive that it rendered yet heavier the depression under which she laboured. She returned my embrace ; the tears stole down her cheeks ; but she was silent. I endeavoured to divert her thoughts and reanimate her spirits, by hinting at the new scenes before us and the distant country to which we were about to remove ; but in vain. I will not reproach you, Reginald ! said she ; I will not desert my duty while I have power to perform it ; you may depend upon my doing every thing I am able both for the children and yourself !

She

She left me in a very melancholy frame of mind. I had not expected to see her in this languid and disconsolate temper; and upon the eve of my liberation, I felt it like caprice. Incomparable woman! She was incapable of giving intentional pain: but, with her exquisitely susceptible mind, she was unable to support the dreadful reverse in which I had involved her, or even at times to assume the gestures of cheerfulness and tranquillity; gestures that, at the best, but ill disguised the grief within!

I was busily reflecting on what had just occurred, when the keeper of the prison reentered my apartment. I am come, monsieur, said he, to take my leave of you. As I do not at all intend to lose my place, it is not proper that I should see you any more. You understand me?

Two days had already elapsed since the conclusion of our contract, and I had provided myself for this and such other demands as seemed likely to be immediately impending. I should have preferred indeed to have delayed this payment till the moment of my departure: but what the jailor suggested appeared reasonable; and I could not assign, even to my own mind, any cause why I should be reluctant to comply with it. I paid to this wretch the price of his villainy.

I now began to count the hours, and eagerly to anticipate the arrival of midnight. Though the moment of my liberty was so near, I yet contemplated with unspeakable loathing the scene of my confinement, which was associated with the deepest disgrace and the blackest charges that are incident to a human creature. I felt as if, in proportion as I removed from the hated spot,

spot, I should at least shake off a part of the burthen that oppressed me, and grow comparatively young again.

Time was far from moving indeed with the rapidity my impatience required ; but the hour of appointment at last was near, and I expected every moment the faithful negro to appear, and announce to me my freedom. The cathedral bell now sounded twelve ; I heard the noise of steps along the gallery ; and presently a key was applied to the door of my apartment. It opened ; and three persons, whom I knew for servants of the prison, entered.

Come, sir, said one of them ; you must follow me.

Where is my friend the negro ? said I.

Ask no questions ; speak never a word ; but come.



It was strange, that the master of the prison, whose temper was so full of anxiety and caution, should unnecessarily trust three of his people, who might easily have been kept ignorant of this hazardous secret! This circumstance however did not strike me at first so strongly as it ought to have done. I had the utmost confidence in his fidelity to his profligate bargain, and expected every moment to meet the negro who was to be my guide. My conductors led me by a way which I soon perceived did not lead to the ordinary entrance of the prison.

Where are we going? said I.

Hold your tongue, or you will spoil all; replied one of them roughly.

I bethought me that there might be an objection to the dismissing me by the public gate; I recollected to have heard that there were several subterranean

near outlets to the citadel; I judged from the words I had just heard that my conductors were acquainted with the plan that had been formed; and for all these reasons I proceeded with tolerable ease and security. I was not much longer however permitted to doubt. I was conducted to one of the dungeons of the prison, and told that there I was to remain. At first I remonstrated loudly, and told them that I had been promised my liberty, and not a treatment like this.

We know that, sir, replied they, and that is the reason you are brought here. It is our business to teach you that the greatest offence that can be committed by a man in prison, is to attempt to escape.

The shock and surprise that so unexpected an issue to my adventure produced, rendered me outrageous. I was no longer able to control my fury;  
and,

and, without knowing what I proposed, I knocked down two of my attendants before they had an opportunity to secure me, and rushed up the flight of steps by which we had descended. The third however contrived to intercept me; and, while we struggled, the other two came to his assistance. They loaded me with fetters and chained me to the wall. I was then left in utter darkness.

I felt myself sore with the bruises I had received in the contest; but what was infinitely worse, I found the expectations of freedom I had so confidently entertained, baffled and disappointed. Marguerite and my children were at this moment waiting for me to join them. They would probably wait hour after hour in vain. To what cause would they attribute my failing of my appointment? To what cause was I myself to attribute my miscarriage?

age? My hopes in this instance had been in the utmost degree sanguine; what was I to count upon for the future? Was money useless in every instance, in which mankind agreed to think its power unquestionable? What was the source of the present catastrophe and the harsh treatment I endured? Was the keeper of the prison discovered, and dismissed from his office? Had the negro gone, and given information against him? I formed a thousand conjectures as to what might have happened; but I was unable to rest in any.

I had remained about twelve hours in this situation, full of angry and disconsolate thoughts, when the principal jailor entered my dungeon. I looked at him with astonishment; the clouds vanished from my understanding, and I began to comprehend the real solution of the enigma.

Are



Are you at large? cried I with indignation. Why then am I here?

You are here by my orders.

Execrable villain! said I. Did you not promise me my freedom? Have you not received the price of it? How dare you show yourself in my presence? As I spoke, I shook my chains, I clenched my fists, I trembled with resentment and rage.

If you are not perfectly quiet and reasonable, said he, I shall leave you to your fate, and return no more.

Nothing is more singular in a state of great mental effervescence than the rapidity with which our ideas succeed each other. At such times we seem to think more in minutes than at other times in hours. I felt how miserable a slave a man is, the moment he falls completely into the power of another. The wretch who stood before me was more vacant of human affections, than  
any

any one I ever saw. Yet I was his creature, to be moulded as he pleased. A thousand injuries he could inflict upon me, for which neither the institutions of society, nor the extraordinary endowments I derived from the stranger, could afford a remedy. He might so torture my mind and baffle my wishes, as to kill in me every spark of lofty adventure and generous pride. My liberty might for aught I knew be for years at his disposal. I felt however that my best course was to regard him with contempt, and use him as I would a spade or a file, to execute my purposes, without suffering him to waken my passions. I immediately grew more calm, and he perceived the revolution of my sentiments.

You seem to wonder, continued he, that I did not keep my engagement with you? I pride myself upon being superior to the prejudices, by which  
other

other men are frightened, like children with a bugbear. I have therefore no rule but my interest; and I did not see how my interest bound me to keep my engagement with you.

And what became of the countess?

I neither know nor care. I suppose she staid all night under the walls; I knew she durst not disturb the prison.

I felt I had still emotions to suppress. I curbed my tongue, but they showed themselves in my eyes.

How do you intend to dispose of me?

Keep you in close custody. I have got your thousand pounds; the next thing for me to take care of is that I do not lose my place.

And for what purpose do you come to me now?

Why to tell you a secret, I am not quite determined what conduct to pursue, and therefore I came here that I might

might have a better opportunity of judging.

Are you not afraid that I should inform the government how you have cheated me?

You inform! Have not I got you under lock and key? I warrant you, I will take care what goes out of these walls to the government.

The countess has a licence to visit me.

What care I for that? I can keep her at bay as long as I will. She will not easily go to the government; and she is not such a fool as not to know, that to lodge a complaint against me, is not the way to procure the liberty of a man condemned to perpetual imprisonment. I can at any time trump up a story of your attempting to corrupt the turnkeys, and be sure, when I do, I will not want for proofs. That will cover any thing I can do to annoy



you, and answer any accusation you can make against me. Do you think that the word of a jailor will not be taken, before that of the murderer he has in custody?

I can bring your own servants as witnesses, three of whom assaulted me last night.

Dunce, do you think I trusted them with my secret? They have nothing to tell, and apprehend nothing but a plot between you and my black, who has been put into the penitentiary for his offence. He is my only confidant; and I trust him, because his stupidity answers to me for his faith.

Suppose I were to double the bribe for which you sold me my liberty, what security should I have that you would abide by your bargain?

Oh, if you were to do that, it would alter the case.

Might

Might you not then detain the money, and defy me, as you have done now?

Suppose that a thing which might happen: can you help yourself? can you do better?

I saw there was no remedy, and I was constrained to allow the success of this two-fold perfidy. It was with an ill grace, and an attempt at sullenness and indifference, that the jailor accepted my proposal. The second thousand however had irresistible charms; and, in spite of himself, the sensation that made his heart dance, relaxed his muscles, and played about his mouth. He was puzzled what to think of me. The facility with which I produced the sums he demanded, with less apparent effort than they might have come from a duke or sovereign prince, startled and staggered him. He had still his qualms, and evidently doubted

Q 2

whether

whether he should not raise his price a third time. I saw no safety but in pertinacity and firmness, and had the good fortune ultimately to check his doubtful, half-formed experiments.

I was led by the accidents which have just been related, into further and deeper reflections on the power of money, as well as on the nature of the situation in which I found myself placed by the legacy of the stranger. My present experiment had been made upon a subject apparently the most favourable that could have been devised, upon a man whose breast the love of gold occupied without a rival: yet with this man I very hardly succeeded. I was not indeed so blinded by the present dejection of my spirit and sickness of my heart, as to imagine that I had not a secure game with this base-minded wretch, if I consented to play it. I had only to enlarge my  
bribe,

bribe, to change it from the limited sum of two thousand pounds to the more brilliant offer of two thousand per annum, and no doubt I might have led him with me to the extremity of the globe. However he might have demurred, however he might have doubted, however curiosity, whetted even to agony by the goadings of avarice, might have prompted him to an incessant enquiry within himself as to the solution of my character and my powers, his grasping spirit would infallibly have chained his tongue, and been surety for his fidelity. But I could not yet prevail upon myself to endow such groveling and noxious propensities with so rich a reward. I considered, in the language of the stranger, that the talent I possessed was of the most momentous nature, and bestowed by the governor of the universe for the highest purposes; and

I should



I should have held myself unjustifiable in enriching by its means, however urgent the necessity might appear, the most worthless of mankind.

The sentiments of my tyrant varied every hour; he was fickle, anxious, and undetermined; harrassed with the double fear of losing the sum already obtained, and of not securing the whole of what was capable of being acquired. He parted with me at last with all the pangs of a lover, who witnesses the ceremony of his mistress's taking the monastic veil, and being sundered from him for ever. I was his Fortunatus's purse, and this was the last day he was to enjoy the use of it; I was to him as the buried treasure of some long-forgotten hoarder, and he feared he should quit his digging before he had carried off every thing that the field concealed. At length however he began to apprehend that  
he

he had urged the refinement of an unprincipled avarice as far as it would go; and therefore in a few days, the negro being already discharged from his penance, he suffered us to escape together.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.